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ABSTRACT

Intended for use in curriculum planning, course development, and program evaluation, this report contains data from a study of the writing abilities of entering freshman students at the University of Texas at El Paso. The first chapter of the report provides background information concerning the need for systematic assessment of the writing abilities of entering freshman, the design of the study, the theoretical framework used in the study, and a description of the University's composition program. The second chapter details the study's methodology, specifically describing the instruments and writing tasks used, scoring procedures, and instructions to teachers. The five sections of the third chapter contain (1) background information on the subjects, including subjects' standardized reading and entrance test scores; (2) a discussion of responses to the survey questionnaire completed by all students enrolled in the Freshman Composition Program in Fall 1983; (3) a summary of students' composing processes on the writing tasks; (4) sample student essays, along with commentary explaining what is characteristic of papers at selected points in the continuum from poorest to best; and (5) reports on the surface features of a subsample of the essays. Sixty-four data tables are interspersed throughout the report. Appendixes contain copies of materials used in the study, including the survey questionnaire. (FL)

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The University of Texas at El Paso Writing Assessment, Fall 1983: A Report

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I. CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND*

1. The Problem: Need for Systematic Assessment of Writing Abilities of Entering Freshmen

In recent years, faculty in the freshman composition program at The University of Texas at El Paso have grown rapidly and significantly in intellectual sophistication and professional commitment. Through faculty development and research funds, the English Department, the College of Liberal Arts, and the University at large have supported a major redirection of faculty energies toward improved teaching and research in composition and rhetoric. Outside experts have conducted workshops and provided consultantships; faculty in the English Department have cooperated in writing-across-the-curriculum projects and in dissemination programs involving the community college and local public schools; tenured faculty have attended institutes, symposia, and scholarly conferences; new personnel with specialization in composition research have joined the department. Overall, faculty have kept abreast of--and frequently contributed to--recent developments in rhetoric, linguistics, and psychology which have created a completely new paradigm of the development of writing abilities. Moreover, many faculty members have translated theoretical views into practical classroom strategies.

At the same time, as Odell (1981) notes, extensive media commentary on an alleged writing crisis, coupled with public concern about changing demographics of university enrollments, has created "a growing sense that

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the public, not to mention our students, deserves a comprehensive assessment of our students' competence as writers" (95). The University of Texas at El Paso has not been immune to these national trends. Arguments about admission standards and students' abilities at UTEP are conducted in the faculty senate, in the student newspaper, in the local media, and occasionally in The Chronicle of Higher Education. More informally, both inside and outside the English Department, faculty frequently express an impressionistic sense that our in-coming students bring different writing abilities from those they ideally should have and that the sociolinguistic situation of our border community produces unique differences in language use. Consequently, there tends to be an assumption, largely unexamined, that instructors at UTEP face unusual challenges in teaching writing.

To the extent that they are premises in the ongoing attempt of any institution of higher learning to define its essential values, such assumptions about the writing ability of our students may be initially resistant to critical examination. Nevertheless, no institution whose rationale is scholarly inquiry can afford for very long to conduct discussions of academic policy without accompanying, systematic study of the nature of its student population. In recent years, Professor Carlene Walker of the Department of English has conducted carefully designed studies of the abilities and progress of provisionally admitted students at the University, thus providing an example of how decisions about admissions policy, pedagogy, course design, and program evaluation can be informed by careful scholarship. The current study seeks to expand upon Professor Walker's work by compiling detailed data, within a carefully considered theoretical framework, about the writing abilities of all entering freshman

composition students (not only provisional students) in the fall of 1983. These data will serve, first, as a detailed description of students' abilities as they enter the composition program and, later, as a base against which to measure their progress as they proceed towards graduation. We believe that this study will provide essential information for intelligent curriculum planning, course development, and evaluation within the composition program; in addition, it will have implications for decisions about admissions and curricula for the University as a whole. Certainly the information gathered in this study should give us tangible evidence--not merely individual or collective impressions--concerning the actual strengths and limitations of student writers at this university.

2. History of the Study

While the need for an empirical, as opposed to an impressionistic, sense of our entering students' writing abilities had been felt within the English Department for some time, the present study began to take concrete shape in the fall of 1982. Dr. Lawrence J. Johnson, who was at that time chairperson of the Department, charged the Freshman English Committee (since retitled the Composition Committee) with the articulation of goals in program and curriculum for the next several years. He included the idea of systematic measurement of students' abilities as a basis for informed decisions. The Committee accepted Dr. Johnson's agenda, and charged four faculty members, John A. R. Dick, Barbara Gordon, David McQueen, and George Newell, with the development of a plan for assessment.

In the spring of 1983, this task force conducted extensive discussion and review of current writing theory and testing procedures, and made some

key preliminary decisions concerning rationale, design, and instrumentation of the study. Dr. Newell, who left our faculty at the end of the 1983 academic year, was particularly knowledgeable and articulate about the educational psychology of writing and about the literature on testing. The design of the current study owes a great deal to him. By the end of the spring, the task force had prepared a formal proposal, together with some preliminary designs for administration and instrumentation. This proposal received the enthusiastic endorsement of Dr. Diana Natalicio, who was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

In summer of 1983, we conducted a pilot study of the instruments and protocols for instructors that we had prepared, and made appropriate revisions for the actual administration of the assessment in fall, 1983. David McQueen, who also left the faculty at the end of the fall semester, 1983, was particularly hard-working during the pilot study and perceptive in his suggestions for revisions of instructions and procedures. At this time, we also submitted a formal proposal for funding of the assessment to the University Research Institute, which endorsed the proposal and provided $2600 in funding. The assessment was also supported by departmental materials and operations funds, and by released time for one of the members of the task force, Dr. Barbara Gordon, to supervise the creation of the data files and perform the statistical analyses. We are indebted to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Natalicio for their continued support of the study.

The actual assessment was conducted in fall, 1983, with the enthusiastic cooperation of the English Department faculty, particularly the ten instructors whose classes were selected for a more extensive study. At this time, Dr. Howard Scheiber, then a new member of the English

Department faculty, joined the task force. His expertise in administering holistic and primary trait scoring sessions of writing samples has proven invaluable to the project. Assisting us in the evaluation of the writing samples during the 1983-84 academic year were some twenty-one faculty members and fourteen graduate assistants from eight departments, as well as two staff members of the Dean of Liberal Arts' office.

3. Writing Abilities and Assessment: A Theoretical Framework and a Review of the Literature

In designing this study, we carefully reviewed current developments in psychology, linguistics and rhetoric that might inform our thinking about the writing abilities of in-coming students. First, we attempted to define "writing ability"; we soon discovered that no single adequate definition or measurement is possible. Several researchers, approaching the problem from both psychological and rhetorical perspectives, have stressed the multiplicity of tasks in writing and the situational constraints on each particular act of writing. Nold (1979) points out that writing involves a complex hierarchy of intellectual decisions, knowledge of conventions, and motor skills; a measurement of one ability in this hierarchy may give little information about others. For example, a student's penmanship or spelling ability gives no clue to his or her ability to think critically or to organize an essay. Kinneavy (1971), Britton (1970), and Applebee (1981) --among others--suggest a wide range of aims and audiences for particular instances of discourse. Kinneavy's rhetorical taxonomy groups written documents according to four underlying purposes: to inform, to persuade, to express values, and to create a literary artifact. Britton, examining

writing in British schools, identifies three types of writing that may occur: writing to explore a problem or to express a personal engagement with ideas; writing done essentially for the teacher; and imaginative or creative writing. Applebee expands and adds detail to Britton's categories of school writing, in particular subdividing formal classroom tasks such as examination questions and report topics according to their varying intellectual purpose and difficulty. In the light of the multiple purposes and audiences for writing identified by these theorists, it seemed to us advisable to use great caution in generalizing from success in one type of writing task to ability in very different types. As a result, we sought to include as many measurements of abilities related to writing skills as practical. Moreover, we took care in designing writing tasks to define purpose, audience, and intellectual tasks involved; further, we deliberately sought to vary these conditions in different tasks.

Having decided to test as many facets of "writing ability" as feasible, we next considered what instruments to use. The assessment of writing abilities can be made by two general types of instruments, direct and indirect, each with inherent strengths and limitations. Stiggens (1982) provides a summary. Indirect (or "objective") instruments typically are highly reliable and cost-effective, but require inference about overall writing ability from performance on cognitive tasks similar to low-level subtasks in actual writing. Direct writing samples do entail actual generation of text, involving all levels of tasks in writing; nevertheless, reliable assessment requires investments of time for careful design of prompts, training of graders, and evaluation of responses. Further, particular writing tasks include highly specific conditions of purpose,

audience, and intellectual demands, so that inference from one writing sample to general writing ability requires extreme caution. Finally, as Herrington (1982) notes, any test of writing skills must be kept in careful perspective: "It can give a partial notion of an individual's writing skills judged relative to a certain community's values. It does not measure some universal skill of 'good writing'" (12). Herrington reminds us that writing is a social activity and that evaluation of any example of writing depends upon the norms of the community that receives it.

In summary, in designing this assessment of the writing abilities of in-coming freshmen, we attempted to articulate a working model of the writing phenomenon, a model that takes into account both the multiple cognitive and motor skills involved in producing text, and the complex social and intellectual contexts of communication. We tried to include as wide a range as practicable of both direct and indirect measures, in an attempt to assess a range of skills exhibited on divergent tasks. When choosing or designing each testing instrument, we sought to define as clearly as possible the nature of that instrument, both what parts of the spectrum of "writing ability" it purports to measure and the means it uses to measure them. Finally, we deliberately sought to articulate, and insofar as possible to measure, those qualities of writing valued within the university environment.

4. Description of the Composition Program

The Freshman Composition Program at the University of Texas at El Paso consists of five courses. English 3001 (which must be taken concurrently with English 3110) is a remedial writing/reading course that does not carry

college credit but can be used to remove provisional status. Provisionally admitted students who score 290 or below on the Verbal SAT test or 12 and below on the ACT-English test must enroll in English 3001. English 3110 is a developmental or basic writing class; students who score below 40 on the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE, a subsection of the SAT test) or below 19 on the ACT-English test must enroll in English 3110. English 3111 is a traditional entry level college expository writing course; English 6111 combines expository writing (on the same level as English 3111) with an introduction to public speaking. Students with TSWE scores of 40 and above or ACT-English scores of 19 and above, or who have passed English 3110, may enroll in English 3111 or 6111. English 3112 emphasizes critical and research writing. Students who pass English 3111, or who meet various rigorous tests (including writing samples graded by members of the English Department), may enroll in English 3112.

II. CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

1. Sampling

Some part of the evaluation affected all students enrolled in English 3110, 3111, and 6111 in fall 1983. Students in all sections of these classes completed a survey questionnaire (see Appendix A); of these students, those who had not previously taken a composition course at UTEP were identified as "in-coming students." A very small group of students bypass English 3110 and 3111/6111 by placement testing and enroll immediately in English 3112. Fall 1983 students who placed into English 3112 were contacted through the campus Testing Service and also completed the questionnaire. These entering 3112 students were included in the category of in-coming students. These in-coming students constituted the largest subgroup in the assessment. We have also reported data from the questionnaire (as well as other instruments) for the "ongoing students," those who reported that they had received previous instruction in composition at UTEP.

A subsample of the English 3110 and 3111/6111 classes was selected for more extensive assessment. First, three categories of classes were identified: linked sections of English 3001 and English 3110; regular English 3110 classes; and English 3111/6111 classes. Then, particular sections were selected in proportion to the number of sections in each category. There were fourteen sections of English 3110 linked with English 3001, twenty regular sections of English 3110, thirty-eight sections of English 3111, and three sections of English 6111 offered in fall 1983. Included in the subsample were four sections of English 3110/3001, six

regular-enrollment sections of English 3110, ten sections of English 3111, and two sections of English 6111. Insofar as possible, a random-number table determined which sections were selected. One instructor of the linked 3110/3001 courses asked not to be included in the evaluation because of the already heavy burden of a new preparation and supervision of several staff members; accordingly, the classes of the other instructor of this special remedial course were the ones chosen for the sample. In the case of regular 3110 and 3111/6111 classes, once an instructor's section was randomly selected, all his or her sections of the same course were included to avoid unnecessary disruption of class planning. The selection by random number continued for each type of class until the target proportional number (approximately one third of the class sections) was reached for each category. The actual number of sections chosen for intensive study was twenty-two.

Students in the sections selected for the subsample completed two writing tasks and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, form E (see Appendices B and C). In addition, further information (such as standardized test scores submitted for admission to the university) has been compiled for the students in the selected sections. With this subsample, results are reported in two ways: first, for students who were actually new to the UTEP composition program, to provide a profile of the abilities of "in-coming" students; second, for those students reporting previous composition instruction at UTEP, to give a sense of the writing abilities and instructional needs of those students who are "ongoing" in the composition sequence. (It should be noted that the ongoing students would include students who initiated their composition instruction in English

3110 or who are repeating either English 3110 or 3111/6111; students who have successfully completed English 3111 are out of the purview of this study.) Taken together, the two sets of data yield an outline of typical classroom groups at each course level.

Finally, a smaller subsample of responses to the writing tasks has been selected from the three class levels, English 3110/3001, regular English 3110, and English 3111/6111. This selection was made by choosing twenty responses to each of the two tasks at each class level. The selection was made randomly from papers in each scoring category in the holistic and primary trait evaluations, in proportion to the percentage of each type of paper in the larger sample. Thus these papers provide an impression of the representative writing performance at each level. In addition, they have been systematically studied for surface-level features such as syntactic maturity and specific deviations from standard written English (see Appendix D, "UTEP Writing Assessment: Quantifiable Features" checklist).

2. Instrumentation

2.1. Survey Questionnaire. The survey questionnaire, completed by all students in the study, elicited information in four areas: (1) general background (including place of previous writing instruction, age, sex, and broad sociolinguistic level); (2) past writing experience (including formal instruction in particular writing strategies); (3) current writing process; and (4) attitudes toward writing. A copy of this instrument is included in Appendix A.

2.2. Writing Tasks. Students in the sections selected for intensive study were briefed about the assessment during the first week of classes. Then, during the second and third weeks of classes, they responded to two writing exercises. We decided that having students complete the writing tasks outside of class over a period of a few days, rather than in a timed writing session in class, would give us a better sense of their actual writing abilities. Given that "test" conditions are somewhat artificial, we considered it important to reduce testing anxiety and time pressure as much as possible. We believe that the actual writing conditions were more like those on typical college writing assignments than they would have been in a timed performance during one class period. (The difference in time periods between MWF and TTh classes, 50 minutes versus 80 minutes, also influenced our decision to have the writing completed outside of class.)

We also designed writing exercises that would call upon students to use different types of data, to employ different cognitive strategies, to demonstrate different rhetorical methods of development, and to respond to different audiences. We decided to give writing tasks that fall within the same general purpose for writing, writing to inform, because we believe that other major purposes for writing (to express personal emotions or convictions, to persuade others to adopt a course of action, or to create a work of literature) are either peripheral to most students' college writing experience, or taught in elective courses for students with particular reasons for developing abilities in these areas. In other words, most college students will write research reports and answer essay exam questions; only a few with particular personal or career goals will take courses in editorial writing or creative writing.

Within the broad category of informative writing, we identified two methods of development as more or less central to many college writing assignments: (1) organized reporting of data already acquired and (2) analysis of new data, followed by generalization and substantiation. We considered it probable that these two methods of development also entail different cognitive demands. Further, we reasoned that the first type of task resembles the type of writing and reasoning that students are familiar with from high school; such writing tasks are most likely to be encountered in college in introductory courses. Thus the ability to organize and report data can be considered an "entry-level" skill for college freshmen. The second type of task, we postulated, may represent a "higher-level" type of reasoning and is likely to be more common in students' classroom experience as they advance in their academic major. Our including such a task in the assessment, then, was intended as a probe of students' maximum abilities. In addition to seeing whether they were minimally prepared for college writing, we wanted to examine how well they responded to a challenging intellectual task.

Writing Exercise #1. Writing Exercise #1 asks students to make a generalization about themselves and to support that generalization by narration of personal experience. This task requires no special knowledge of the student; it specifies a relatively informal stance and a friendly audience. Successful completion does require some proficiency with basic conventions of organizing, including proposition/support structure and narrative (chronological) order. Students were introduced to the task and allowed to begin writing at the beginning of a class session; they were allowed until the next class day (forty-eight hours) to complete it. The

complete materials given to students and instructors with Writing Exercise #1 are included in Appendix B.1.a.

Writing Exercise #2. The second writing task provides students with information and requires them to analyze and report on the data. Specifically, students are confronted with two advertisements for the same cigarette brand, prompted to consider the advertisements as examples of persuasive discourse directed at particular audiences, and asked to report their general observations, supported by specific details. The exercise thus requires some familiarity with American middle-class cultural norms. Further, it is deliberately worded as a rather formal "school" task without a specific audience (the audience thus becomes, by default, the instructor as examiner). Successful completion of the task involves knowledge of the social conventions alluded to by the creators of the advertising campaign, the ability to frame a proposition about the intended audience of the ads, and fairly complex organizational strategies to relate specific details in the ads to higher level generalizations about audience and appeal. It thus demands that students respond at somewhat more difficult--and more overtly academic--levels of register, audience, thinking, and organization than does the first task.

Students were introduced to the task and allowed to begin writing on the class day that they handed in their response to the first writing exercise. Students were given five days (one hundred twenty hours) to complete their responses. Materials pertinent to the second writing exercise are included in Appendix B.1.b.

3. Information about the Composing Process

In addition to their completed responses to the two writing exercises, students were asked to record the estimated time they spent on the writing tasks (including time in class after the materials were distributed) and to include any materials they produced while planning and drafting their essays. Summary information about the composing strategies of the students in the sample is given in Tables 29-32 (pp. 40-41). More detailed analysis of these materials will follow in future studies and may yield insight into the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of students' composing processes, with possible implications for instruction.

4. Briefing and Debriefing of Instructors

Instructors of the classes selected for more intensive evaluation received detailed instructions for each component of the assessment (see Appendix B.2-B.4 for copies of handouts); in addition, we held a one-hour briefing session for these instructors to answer any questions and to discuss matters we might have overlooked in our instructions. We were pleased by the cooperativeness and interest of the instructors, particularly their understanding of the need for controlling the experimental conditions as much as possible in introducing the tasks to students. We also found a high level of professional responsiveness to the overall enterprise of gathering detailed, specific data about our students' writing. After the assessment was completed, each of the instructors who participated in the more intensive assessment was interviewed by a member of the assessment team to see whether any significant differences could be

discerned in the actual procedures followed in the individual sections. No such differences were apparent, although some instructors reported general enthusiasm and cooperativeness from students while others noted that individual students seemed irritated at being tested yet again, possibly because of the ubiquity of competency testing in secondary schools.

5. Ratings

The writing responses identified by students as their final, completed drafts were evaluated by holistic and primary-trait criteria in several ranking sessions conducted in fall 1983 and spring 1984. As a service to faculty and graduate assistants in the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Education, these sessions were conducted in part as training sessions in efficient methods of dealing with large numbers of student papers. We are indebted to the services of some sixteen full-time and five part-time faculty members, as well as fourteen graduate assistants, from the departments of English, Political Science, Mass Communication, Linguistics, Modern Languages, Sociology, Drama and Speech, and Curriculum and Instruction. Two members of the staff of the Dean of Liberal Arts' office also participated. (See Appendix E for copies of memos to faculty members requesting participation in rating sessions.)

In both holistic and primary-trait scoring, raters were trained to ignore specific surface features (such as errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar) while focusing on more global considerations of overall quality. The raters received about three hours' training in the principles of these two types of general-impression scoring, plus about an hour and a half's practice with papers selected from the sample for training purposes.

Only when raters had discussed the features of writing in the sample and had exhibited agreement about the scoring of sample papers did the rating of the papers proceed. During the evaluation session, raters were told to rate papers fairly quickly (in part, to avoid contaminating the general impression of the paper's quality by bringing surface features to a conscious level), and to submit problem papers, responses that did not quickly fit into an obvious category, to the leaders of the rating session. One type of problem paper was identified as a response completely off the topic; such papers received a rating of "0" and were removed from the sample. In addition, each rater used a code which was known only to the session leaders. Responses that received ratings greater than one level apart were arbitrated by the team leaders; thus, an essay rated as a "3" by one rater and a "2" by another received a composite score of "5", but a split of "3" and "1" required arbitration. The arbitration of split scores reduced the chance of personal idiosyncrasies obtruding in the scoring session. This procedure resulted in great efficiency of rating and high inter-rater reliability. Thus these two methods of scoring provide reliable information about the overall quality of student performance on each writing task as judged by calibrated members of the University faculty.

In holistic scoring, papers were ranked in four categories (category one being the poorest, category four the best) based on the quality of writing exhibited in the sample as a whole. In other words, while a "four level" paper might not be flawless when compared to some Platonic Idea of the college freshman's best essay, it was agreed upon by the raters to represent one of the best papers written by these students on that

particular topic. Similarly, a "one level" paper conceivably might not be terribly bad by some external standard; nevertheless, raters agreed that it was one of the least good papers in this sample. In short, there was no external standard of quality imposed in the holistic rating sessions; instead, the holistic score yields information about the quality of the individual student's writing response in comparison to the writing of his or her peers at UTEP in this particular sample.

In primary trait scoring sessions, raters focused on one crucial aspect of quality in writing: the extent to which the individual writing sample responded successfully to rhetorical demands of the exercise. To a degree, primary trait scoring measures whether, and how well, students respond to the "assignment"--certainly a major consideration for college instructors in evaluating their students' papers. Raters were trained to exclude from their evaluation such considerations as fluency and style except as these qualities served to advance the students' responsiveness to criteria of audience, development, and organization implicit in the writing task itself. Moreover, scores on the holistic evaluation were not disclosed to the primary trait raters. Thus it would be possible for a very fluent and stylistically sophisticated paper to be rated high in the holistic session, but to be scored significantly lower in primary trait scoring if it somehow evaded or blurred the rhetorical demands of the task. To some extent, then, the primary trait scoring criteria introduce an external standard against which the quality of student writing samples is measured. While this standard is hardly an absolute one, measuring as it does only one narrow aspect of successful communication, it does add an important dimension to the relative ranking of holistic scoring. (See

Appendix F for copies of primary trait scoring guides.)

In Chapter III.4, we offer samples of writing from the various class levels, arranged roughly to correspond to the quality of writing exhibited by the larger groups. (We also note percentages scoring at each rank by class level.) As will be seen, these samples represent a wide range of quality of writing. Some are essays of fluency and style; many are fairly presentable efforts for college freshmen; some may prompt comments, especially from faculty members unaccustomed to dealing with basic writers, about literacy crises and a nation at risk. In any case, we have included these sample papers to concretize our comments about the scoring processes and about the qualities of student writing in UTEP freshman composition classes.

6. Surface Feature Scoring

A subsample of some sixty student papers was chosen for more extensive study of surface features. For this subsample, we chose responses to Writing Exercise #2 because this task was more directly reflective of academic writing. Twenty papers were selected for each level (3110/3001, regular 3110, and 3111/6111), in approximately the same proportion of general-impression scoring ranks for the corresponding class level. A scoring sheet was prepared for use by a trained student assistant; care was taken to include only quantifiable, unambiguous features of syntax and grammar. A copy of this scoring sheet is included in Appendix D.

The scoring sheet logically divides into two parts: features of syntactic maturity and organization, on the one hand, and features of grammar and mechanics, on the other. A number of features related to the

overall organization and sentence structure of each essay were quantifiable. Whether the student writes a single paragraph or a multi-paragraph essay may suggest lesser or greater sophistication in his or her concept of essay form. Total number of words provides a rough index to the extensiveness of development in the essay. Total number of sentences and total number of T-units (that is, actual independent clauses together with embedded or attached subordinate clauses, regardless of whether these are punctuated conventionally) may be guidelines of the student's "syntactic maturity," of his or her ability to sustain a relatively long and complex sentence that embeds several ideas. This is especially true when ratios of words per sentence and per T-unit, and T-units per sentence are calculated.

At an even smaller level than the sentence, we have identified several measurable surface features of grammar and mechanics for study. We considered the first two categories, sentence problems and inflection problems, to be more serious both because they tend to cause readers to reject the writer's effort as illiterate and because, in our experience, they indicate basic misunderstandings of the conventions of written standard English. For some students, particularly those for whom English is a second language, they may also indicate learner errors, intermediate forms that are used because the full grammatical system of the language has not yet been mastered. Both these types of error may persist in student writing for some time after direct instruction in "correct" forms, because producing the conventional form entails learning an entire system of the language. The other two categories, pronoun problems and mechanics (including spelling), we consider less serious, even though individual

readers may find them intolerable. Except for the small category of students whose spelling appears almost incognizant of the patterns of written English, these problems can usually be attacked by relatively simple algorithms--tests for pronoun case, step-by-step rules for apostrophes, and mnemonic devices for spelling pitfalls.

We checked our student assistant's work carefully and found that all but one of these features were recorded consistently and accurately. The exception was the T-unit count. Since we could not absolutely rely on the accuracy of these results, we have not reported them in the current document. Instead, data on T-units in the subsample will be included in an early follow-up study to this report. We will, in future studies, be examining relationships between organization, syntactic maturity, number and type of errors, and overall quality of writing as measured by holistic and primary trait scoring.

7. Other Scores

We used the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form E, as a measure of students' reading ability. This test was administered to students in the sections selected for intensive study. For all students within the intensive study who were identified as in-coming, we compiled with the help of the Office of Records and Admissions the scores submitted for admission to the University which may have bearing on writing ability. For students presenting SAT scores, these include the Verbal Aptitude score and the TSWE (Test of Standard Written English). For students presenting ACT scores, the ACT-English rating was used.

III. CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

This part of the report is divided into five major sections: (1) background information, including standardized test scores and ethnicity; (2) discussion of the responses to the survey questionnaire; (3) summary of students' composing processes on the writing tasks; (4) sample student essays, accompanied by commentary which explains what is characteristic of papers at selected points in the continuum from poorest to best responses; (5) reports on the surface features--length, number of sentences, number and type of errors--in a sub-sample of student papers.

1. Background Information, Reading Ability, Standardized Test Scores

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two ("Methods"), a subsample of students took the Nelson-Denny Reading Text, Form E. (This subsample was the same group who wrote essays for the assessment.) The results, summarized in Tables 1-4, show that the mean vocabulary level for English 3110/3001 students is grade 9.1; for 3110 students, 10.7; and for 3111/6111 students, 12.3. The mean comprehension level for 3110/3001 students is grade 8.5; for 3110, 9.8; and for 3111/6111, 12.2 It is interesting to note the wide range of students' total scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. The lowest scoring students had reading levels of grade 3.6; there are students with this very low reading level in all three courses in the subsample. There are also a substantial number of students who scored the highest possible level, grade 16.9--in fact so many, that for 3111/6111 students a score of 16.9 was the mode, the most frequent score.

Table 1

Nelson Reading Rate

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	206.1	186.2	211.5	214.2
Median	195.3	184.0	214.2	209.2
Mode	195.0	195.0	195.0	215.0
Range	12 - 619	12 - 619	64 - 370	75 - 501
Standard Deviation	77.7	70.9	67.4	82.8
Skewness	1.2	2.2	0.1	1.1
Number of Cases	359	102	52	159

Table 2

Grade Level Vocabulary

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	11.1	9.1	10.7	12.3
Median	10.9	9.1	10.9	13.0
Mode	10.9	7.4	10.9	12.3
Range	3.6 - 16.9	3.6 - 13.7	5.1 - 15.1	3.6 - 16.9
Standard Deviation	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.8
Skewness	-0.06	0.04	-0.29	-0.63
Number of Cases	369	105	52	165

Table 3

Grade Level Comprehension

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	10.7	8.5	9.8	12.3
Median	10.7	7.9	9.5	12.4
Mode	16.5	7.9	9.4	16.5
Range	3.8 - 16.5	3.8 - 14.7	3.8 - 16.5	3.8 - 16.5
Standard Deviation	3.6	2.6	3.6	3.2
Skewness	-0.02	0.2	-0.1	-0.5
Number of Cases	369	105	52	165

Table 4

Grade Total

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	10.9	8.8	10.2	12.4
Median	10.8	9.2	9.9	12.8
Mode	9.2	9.2	8.0	16.9
Range	3.7 - 16.9	3.7 - 14.0	3.7 - 15.1	3.7 - 16.9
Standard Deviation	3.2	2.3	3.0	2.9
Skewness	-0.1	0.1	-0.3	-0.7
Number of Cases	369	105	52	165

To further enhance our picture of our in-coming students we solicited help from the University administration to obtain the SAT Verbal, TSWE, and ACT English scores (see Tables 5-7) of students in the subsample. Because many students' scores were missing from the records, the sample sizes here are relatively small compared to the number of students in the assessment; still, the results show a large range of ability. Though these scores are not reported by grade level, it is possible to get a feel for our students' abilities by seeing that in each case there are students whose scores were at the very bottom and students whose scores were near the top of the test range. These standardized test scores follow a similar pattern to the Nelson-Denny results in that the 3110 and 3111/6111 students scored successively higher than the 3110/3001 students. 3110/3001 students have mean SAT Verbal, TSWE, and ACT English scores of 271, 28, and 19 respectively. 3110 students' mean scores were 347, 34, and 14 respectively, and 3111/6111 students' mean scores were 384, 41, and 17.

Table 5

Verbal SAT Scores (Score range, 200-800)

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	351.4	271.2	347.3	383.8
Median	346.3	267.9	351.3	380.9
Mode	330.0	260.0	330.0	380.0
Range	200 - 590	200 - 360	200 - 510	200 - 590
Standard Deviation	85.3	35.7	67.0	87.0
Skewness	0.3	0.2	-0.3	0.1
Number of Cases	358	68	79	173

Table 6

TWSE Scores (Score range, 20-60)

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	36.2	27.7	33.8	40.7
Median	35.6	26.5	33.0	42.0
Mode	20.0	20.0	33.0	43.0
Range	20 - 60	20 - 47	20 - 50	20 - 60
Standard Deviation	9.7	6.2	7.1	9.0
Skewness	0.1	0.6	0.4	-0.4
Number of Cases	352	68	79	169

Table 7

ACT English Scores (Score range, 0-36)

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	14.4	9.7	14.0	17.0
Median	14.4	9.5	14.3	18.1
Mode	11.0	11.0	19.0	20.0
Range	3 - 27	3 - 19	3 - 20	3 - 27
Standard Deviation	5.6	3.8	4.1	5.5
Skewness	-0.4	0.4	-0.5	-0.6
Number of Cases	127	26	37	53

The results of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the standardized college entrance tests show that each course in the composition sequence is composed of distinct student populations. This profile is not surprising, considering that in-coming students are initially placed in the respective courses on the basis of standardized test scores. The 3110/3001 classes generally include students with skills below traditional college level, oftentimes far below. There are students with elementary-school reading levels and the lowest possible SAT scores, though most students in these classes performed at the junior high school level, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. The 3110 level students have higher standardized scores than the 3110/3001 students, though their scores are below the entry standards of many colleges. Most of these students are reading at about the tenth grade level. The 3111/6111 courses comprise students whose standardized entrance scores are somewhat low, but whose reading level scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test are appropriate for college-level work. Based on these measures, the 3111/6111 students' skills do not seem far different from those of college freshmen at other public institutions. Thus, assuming that college-level reading skills are a prerequisite for college work of any kind, these students appear ready for the demands of college-level writing.

Overall, then, our remedial reading writing course (English 3110/3001) and our developmental or basic writing course (English 3110) include students generally unprepared for college-level composition, while our 3111/6111 courses represent a relatively able student population. The range of abilities in these courses is dramatic; the implications for instruction and for further investigation are many. To teach composition

effectively to students who display such a wide range of abilities requires a significant commitment of resources and broad institutional support. Such commitment and support is particularly essential to meet the needs of the large number of in-coming students whose abilities, as measured by standardized entrance and reading tests, are greatly different from those traditionally expected of college students.

To complete the profile of the in-coming students, we obtained the following information about the students in our sample: fall 1983 semester grade point average, ethnic background, and college classification (see Tables 8-10). It should be noted that the apparent high enrollment in the College of Liberal Arts is misleading; students who have not yet declared a major are classified as majoring in General Studies and are counseled by personnel in the College of Liberal Arts.

Table 8

Grade Point Average

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.1
Median	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.1
Mode	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Range	0.05 - 4.0	0.2 - 3.7	0.05 - 3.9	0.1 - 4.0
Standard Deviation	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8
Skewness	0.2	0.1	0.2	-0.0
Number of Cases	1957	335	573	953

Table 9

Ethnic Background

Category	Percent
White	39.6
Black	3.3
Hispanic	54.4
Indian	0.2
Non-Resident Alien	2.5

N = 2051

Table 10

College

Category	Percent
Science	6.1
Business	13.6
Education	5.2
Engineering	15.4
Graduate	0
Nursing	4.2
Liberal Arts	51.4

N = 2052

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2. Results of the Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was given to all students enrolled in the 3110/3001, 3110, and 3111/6111 courses during the first weeks of the fall 1983 semester. Although the primary purpose of this report is to present a comprehensive profile of UTEP's in-coming students, the composition classes comprise both in-coming students (students who are taking their first composition course at UTEP) and ongoing students (students who have been

previously enrolled in a composition course at UTEP). Since information on both groups of students was available, the responses for both are reported. Therefore, the results profile in-coming students and, sometimes, contrast these students with ongoing students. Reporting the responses for both groups provides the most complete picture of the students enrolled in our developmental and freshman composition classes.

What is the general background of our beginning level composition students? (See Tables 11-20.) Though there is talk of a national trend for older students to enroll in college, the vast majority of our students are fairly young, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. Most of the in-coming students had their most recent writing instruction in a local high school with very few having composition instruction at El Paso Community College. Assuming they complete college, two-thirds of our students will be part of the first generation in their families to receive a four-year degree.

When they first enter our composition program, our students are equally divided between males and females, though our ongoing students are predominantly male. Slightly more than half of our in-coming students consider themselves bilingual in English and Spanish. More than half of the bilingual students report English is easier for them to speak, and far more report English is easier for them to read and write. Interestingly, more of our ongoing students consider themselves bilingual. There are several possible explanations for the differences between in-coming and ongoing student groups. One is that the attrition rates for monolinguals and females are higher than those for bilinguals and males. Alternatively, successful early completion of the composition sequence may be higher for monolinguals and females.

So who is UTEP's composite freshman composition student? Likely a male in his late teens who graduated from a local high school, who speaks some Spanish, and who is surpassing his parents' educational level.

Table 11

Place of Most Recent Instruction in Writing

	In-coming	Ongoing
UTEP	--	100%
High School	94%	--
El Paso Community College	3	--
4-year college, not UTEP	2	--
2-year college, not EPCC	1	--
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 0	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 12

Writing Course Enrolled In

	In-coming	Ongoing
3110 with 3001	22%	7%
3110	33	15
3111	42	68
6111	2	9
3112	1	1
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 6	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 13

Location of Most Pre-College Education

	In-coming	Ongoing
El Paso System	51%	53%
Ysleta System	32	28
Private school in El Paso	11	8
System within 60 miles of EP	5	7
Mexico	1	4
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 312	Missing Cases = 46
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 14

Sex of Respondent

	In-coming	Ongoing
Female	49%	38%
Male	51	62
	100	100
Missing Cases =	3	1
N =	1795	319

Table 15

Age of Respondent

	In-coming	Ongoing
17-20 years old	88%	66%
21-25 years old	8	24
26-30 years old	2	5
31-35 years old	1	1
36 years or older	1	4
	100	100
Missing Cases =	6	0
N =	1795	319

Table 16

Does Respondent Consider Himself/Herself Bilingual

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	54%	61%
No	46	39
	100	100
Missing Cases =	16	0
N =	1795	319

Table 17

Of Self-Reported Bilingual Students
Language Easier to Speak

	In-coming	Ongoing
English	56%	
Spanish	13	
Speak both with equal ease	31	
	100	100
Missing Cases =	2	Missing Cases =
N =	953	N =

Table 18

Of Self Reported Bilingual Students
Language Easier to Read

	In-coming	Ongoing
English	70%	
Spanish	6	
Read both with equal ease	24	
	100	100
Missing Cases =	4	Missing Cases =
N =	953	N =

Table 19

Of Self Reported Bilingual Students
Language Easier to Write

	In-coming	Ongoing
English	76%	
Spanish	6	
Write both with equal ease	18	
	100	100
Missing Cases =	4	Missing Cases =
N =	953	N =

Table 20

Highest Educational Level of Either One of Parents

	In-coming	Ongoing
Did not complete High School	20%	31%
High School graduate	30	30
Completed 2 years of college	17	14
Received undergraduate degree	18	12
Received graduate degree	15	13
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 21	Missing Cases = 4
	N = 1795	N = 319

How much writing experience do our students have, and what type of writing instruction have they been exposed to? (See Tables 21-28.) Our in-coming students report having written longer pieces and having written more often than our ongoing students. For instance, 31 percent of our in-coming students say that the longest piece they have written is eleven to twenty pages as compared to 22 percent of our ongoing students; and 14 percent of our in-coming students report they write two or more pages a day, as compared to 9 percent of our ongoing students.

In addition, our in-coming students are coming better prepared--at least more aware of traditional formats for college writing. Ninety-one percent of the in-coming students report they are familiar with documenting sources as compared to 79 percent of our ongoing students.[1] Eighty-four percent of the in-coming students report they have had a writing assignment typed, whereas only 78 percent of our ongoing students report they have had an assignment typed.

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[1]The ongoing students have not as yet taken English 3112, "Research and Writing."

The results of the questionnaire suggest that the in-coming students may have had slightly more exposure to innovative composition pedagogy. This finding is particularly significant, since in the past decade and a half a revolutionary pedagogy in composition has emerged, a pedagogy that shifts primary attention from the product of composing (the text) to the process of composing. The particular classroom methods we asked questions about tend to change the composition classroom from a lecture format to a writing workshop or seminar. These methods give students immediate, experiential instruction in ways writers actually write. They result in a much greater amount of actual writing by students than do more traditional methods. In a sense these techniques are not in themselves new; experienced, successful writers have used them (or analogous strategies) for centuries. Nevertheless, their introduction into the classroom is new, and questioning students about their exposure to these techniques gives us important information about the teaching of writing, particularly in the local area from which most of our students come.

Forty percent of the in-coming students have kept a daily journal for six months or longer as compared to 31 percent of the ongoing students. Twenty-three percent of the in-coming students practiced sentence combining two or more times a week for at least six months, whereas 20 percent of the ongoing students have. The remaining students, both in-coming and ongoing, have had less exposure to sentence combining. Free writing (also known as stream of consciousness writing) is the only type of instruction to which ongoing students report having had more exposure than in-coming students. Twenty percent of the ongoing students have practiced freewriting at least twice a week for six months, whereas only 14 percent of the in-coming

students have.

What accounts for the discrepancy between our in-coming and ongoing students? One explanation is that ongoing students may be weaker students. Ongoing students in fall 1983 either entered the composition sequence in English 3110 (a basic writing course) or were repeating English 3110 or 3111/6111. It is possible that during their secondary education these students were exposed to more traditional pedagogy, such as grammar drills. Another possibility is that in-coming students were more inclined to overestimate their writing experience and practice or, in other words, to give the answers they assumed the researchers wanted to hear. Still another explanation might be that the current knowledge explosion in the field of composition is reaching the secondary schools slightly ahead of the university. A disturbing implication of these results is that many students are apparently not exposed to a sufficiently wide variety of writing pedagogies, particularly to techniques that (as established by extensive, published research) foster cognitive growth and syntactic maturation.

Numerous in-service workshops have been held by UTEP faculty for local-area high school teachers, particularly by Dr. Tommy J. Boley for the Ysleta Independent School District. The West Texas Writing Project, begun in summer 1984, promises to increase significantly the level of the teaching of writing in regional school districts. At the same time, equal efforts may be necessary to increase awareness in the University's composition faculty of alternative pedagogical strategies. The series of workshops held for English Department faculty in 1979-82 appear not to have resulted in widespread innovation in classroom instruction. Perhaps these

workshops were not extensive enough, or perhaps follow-up workshops are needed focused on practical classroom applications. Since many permanent faculty members did not attend these workshops, the department and the university need to reconsider means to foster faculty development.

The impact of part-time faculty on the composition program also bears a closer examination. Some 65 percent of the department's composition sections are taught by part-time faculty (as reported by Dr. Robert M. Esch, Director of Composition). Few of these instructors demonstrate scholarly expertise in composition and rhetoric. While some of them may be competent teachers, the commitment of most part-time composition faculty is necessarily limited--especially by energies they must devote elsewhere to earn a living. Reducing dependence on last-minute hirees, coupled with more systematic in-service training for part-time faculty, seems highly desirable.

In summary, our students' reports of the amount and type of writing instruction they have received suggest that much remains to be done to give instructors--at all levels, and across the curriculum--access to current theory and pedagogical practices in the teaching of writing, so that instructors can make informed, professional choices in the ways they structure and teach their courses.

Table 21

Longest Piece of Writing Respondent Has Done

	In-coming	Ongoing
One page or under	1%	3%
Two to five pages	19	34
Six to ten pages	34	31
Eleven to twenty pages	31	22
Twenty pages or more	15	10
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 22

Amount Written During Past Four Years

	In-coming	Ongoing
One page per month	6%	11%
Two to four pages per month	23	30
Two to six pages per week	35	33
Seven to ten pages per week	22	17
Two + pages per day	14	9
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 1	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 23

Has Respondent Typed or Had a Writing Assignment Typed

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	84%	78%
No	16	22
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 23	Missing Cases = 5
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 24

Has Respondent Kept Daily Journal or Diary (6 mos. or longer)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	40%	31%
No	60	69
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 3	Missing Cases = 3
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 25

Has Respondent Used Documentation

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	91%	79%
No	9	21
	100	100
Missing Cases =	8	3
N =	1795	319

Table 26

Respondent's Use of Sentence Combining

	In-coming	Ongoing
Regularly (2 or more times a week for 6 months)	23%	20%
Sometimes (once a week for at least a few months)	44	45
Rarely (once a month for at least a few months)	27	32
Never	6	3
	100	100
Missing Cases =	11	2
N =	1795	319

Table 27

Respondent's Use of Free Writing

	In-coming	Ongoing
Regularly	14%	20%
Sometimes	24	33
Rarely	34	31
Never	28	16
	100	100
Missing Cases =	35	3
N =	1795	319

Table 28

Conferences With Instructor

	In-coming	Ongoing
Regularly	5%	8%
Sometimes	22	28
Rarely	39	39
Never	34	25
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 20	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

What are our students' current writing processes? (See Tables 29-32.) Despite the apparently less contemporary composition instruction that ongoing students report, the ongoing students are more likely to report a sophisticated writing process. A slightly greater percentage of ongoing students report they always or usually engage in pre-writing activities--65 percent, as compared to 56 percent of the in-coming students. A greater percentage of ongoing students report they revise their work both at the levels of content and mechanics. For instance, 72 percent of the ongoing students always or usually revise their content, compared to 65 percent of the in-coming students. The only area where there was no difference between in-coming and ongoing students was in how often they shared their writing with family and peers.

Although it appears there is no dramatic difference between the in-coming and ongoing students, the ongoing students report a composing process that more closely resembles the one used by experienced writers. This may be viewed as good news, especially when one considers that what look like small changes may reflect great strides in writing development. Since writing is a complex set of cognitive skills, one is not likely to

see a major change in a writer's work over the course of a semester; in fact, many instructors look instead for improvement in a writer's composing process, knowing that this will lead to eventual growth in writing ability. Realizing this, we may want to look more closely at ways to encourage and examine changes in our students' composing processes. There is no way of knowing whether instruction has promoted the slight improvement in composing processes that our students report; the changes may be a result of the poorest writers having dropped out or the result of ongoing students' maturing.

Table 29

Engagement in Pre-Writing Activities
(thinking, talking, notetaking, outlining, etc.)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Always	22%	28%
Usually	34	37
Sometimes	29	26
Rarely	11	8
Never	4	1
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 30

Revision at Paragraph Level

	In-coming	Ongoing
Always	27%	28.6%
Usually	38	43
Sometimes	29	26
Rarely	5	2
Never	1	0.6
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 31

Revision at Sentence and Mechanical Level

	In-coming	Ongoing
Always	42%	50%
Usually	38	38
Sometimes	18	12
Rarely	2	0
Never	0	---
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 32

Is Writing Shared with Peers and/or Family

	In-coming	Ongoing
Always	6%	7%
Usually	18	16
Sometimes	43	41
Rarely	24	28
Never	9	8
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

What are our beginning students' attitudes toward discourse types, the importance of writing, their writing instruction, and their own abilities? (See Tables 33-41.) If given a choice, both in-coming and ongoing students generally prefer writing expressive pieces based on personal experience. Secondly, they select writing explanatory pieces. No discourse type was preferred by a particularly large percentage of students; however, one, persuasive, emerged as the least preferred.

One wonders what these preferences indicate. Do students prefer writing based on personal experience because it is the least cognitively

demanding type? Because late adolescents tend to be egocentric? Because no research or outside reading is often required? Or because they are most practiced in this discourse type? Likewise, why is persuasive writing least preferred? Is it because persuasive writing demands the most audience awareness and requires more research than other types? Knowing which discourse types our students find most accessible suggests ways to sequence writing assignments and should prompt us to examine what type of cognitive demands we are placing and would like to place on students.

Students overwhelmingly believe that writing is important for their success at UTEP and later in their career. Slightly more, however, think writing is important for their university work than for their life's work. Numerous studies have reported that competent writing is essential to advance to managerial levels in most professions (see, for example, the volume of College Composition and Communication devoted to "Adults and Writing--in College and on the Job"). However, composition instructors often express frustration because students generally express more interest in improving their course grade than in improving their writing ability.

In-coming and ongoing students differed with regard to their level of writing enjoyment and their view of the quality of their writing instruction. Ongoing students enjoy writing slightly less than in-coming students, and are less likely to rate the quality of their writing instruction as good or excellent. Since the ongoing students are largely students who were required to enroll in the basic writing course and who may have had to repeat it, these results may not be surprising. The discrepancy may then be a result of weaker writers' frustration, of student burnout, of students' displeasure with the difficulty of university work,

or of poor instruction at the university.

Asking students to compare their writing ability with their peers revealed that our students have a somewhat negative view of their abilities. Slightly more students believe they are worse writers than their peers as opposed to better writers. The large number of 3110/3001 and 3110 students may account for this slight negativism since these students are likely aware they have been placed into the university's lowest ability writing courses. Overall, students don't appear to suffer from an unrealistic view of their ability in relation to their peers, although certain individuals might.

A large percentage of students believe they have a great deal of control over improving their writing ability. This is encouraging in light of much research that shows students' feelings of control to be positively related to academic success (see, for example, Phares, Locus of Control in Personality). A bit less encouraging is the news that a great number of our students report they do not exercise this control by putting forth serious effort to improve their writing ability. This is surprising considering so many students reported that writing is important for success in their academic life and future profession. Perhaps their lack of effort is because of crowded academic, work and social schedules, or unrealistic expectations of what they consider substantial effort, or perhaps there is a discrepancy between what they think they ought to be doing and what they do. Whatever the reason(s) it is apparent our students invest their energies in other areas before investing it in improving their writing ability.

The lack of effort students report is disconcerting. Do we need to revise our instruction to further motivate students, or further impress them with writing's importance in their lives? Though we can make changes that we believe will improve our composition teaching, we must hope these changes will be accompanied by our students' making changes to improve their composition learning.

Table 33

Type of Writing Respondent Prefers

	In-coming	Ongoing
Personal experience	35%	37%
Explanation	23	24
Persuasion	7	8
Fiction, poetry, drama	16	10
No difference	19	21
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 9	Missing Cases = 5
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 34

Second Choice of Writing Type

	In-coming	Ongoing
Personal experience	26%	24%
Explanation	31	32
Persuasion	17	22
Fiction, poetry, drama	14	11
No difference	12	11
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 282	Missing Cases = 50
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 35

Is Writing Important To Success in UTEP Coursework

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	95%	94%
No	1 (1.7)	3
Don't Know	4 (3.7)	3
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 7	Missing Cases = 0
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 36

Is Writing Important to Success in Career

	In-coming	Ongoing
Yes	86%	89%
No	6	7
Don't Know	8	4
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 4	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 37

Does Respondent Enjoy Writing

	In-coming	Ongoing
Always	11%	8%
Usually	37	35
Sometimes	42	42
Rarely	8	13
Never	2	2
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 2	Missing Cases = 1
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 38

Evaluation of Quality of Recent Writing Instruction

	In-coming	Ongoing	
Excellent	9%	6%	(6.1)
Good	43	41	(41.3)
Fair	40	44	(44.6)
Poor	6	7	(6.7)
Non-existent	2	1	(1.3)
	100	100	
	Missing Cases = 22	Missing Cases = 7	
	N = 1795	N = 319	

Table 39

Estimation of Own Comparative Writing Ability

	In-coming	Ongoing
Excellent	2%	2%
Good	37	32
Fair	47	53
Poor	9	11
Do not know	5	2
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 12	Missing Cases = 4
	N = 1795	N = 319

Table 40

Estimation of Control Over Improvement of Writing Ability

	In-coming	Ongoing
Very much	61%	57%
Somewhat	35	38
Very little	2	3
Not at all	1	1
Do not know	1	1
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 11	Missing Cases =
	N = 1795	N =

Table 41

Effort Put Into Improving Writing Ability
(within last two years)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Very Much	25%	29%
Somewhat	50	53
Very little	21	16
Not at all	4	2
Do not know	--	--
	100	100
	Missing Cases = 20	Missing Cases = 5
	N = 1795	N = 319

3. Students' Writing Procedure: Evidence from Written Essays

This section reports students' procedures in completing their essays for the two assigned tasks. (See Tables 42-47.) Surprisingly, students spent the same amount of time completing the essays for each task. This is interesting since task two was designed to be more cognitively demanding for students. Either task two was not in fact more difficult, or perhaps the identical times spent on both tasks may indicate that students have a fixed amount of time that they allot to their writing that does not vary substantially with the demands of the assignment.

The amount of time spent on both tasks should also be considered in light of the fact that students were given more time to complete the second task. Including their in-class writing time, students spent one hour, on the average, outside of class to write each essay. Perhaps students did not put much effort into these essays knowing that they would not be considered part of their course grade, or perhaps students generally do not spend a great deal of time on writing assignments. If the latter is the case, it would confirm an earlier finding in which most students reported

they do not invest a great deal of effort in improving their writing ability.

There was a difference in students' processes in writing these two essays with respect to making notes and writing preliminary drafts. About twice as many students showed they had made notes to write essay two (the comparison and contrast essay) than made notes to write essay one (relating a personal quality and an incident to exemplify the quality). Overall, however, the majority of students showed no evidence of notemaking.

More in-coming students turned in rough drafts for task one than task two. Slightly more ongoing students, however, turned in rough drafts for task two. Still, both in-coming and ongoing students turned in notes more often with task two than task one. This suggests that certain tasks, such as task two, lend themselves particularly to notemaking as a prewriting activity, and that for some students notemaking takes the place of writing a rough draft.

Though the majority of students did turn in rough drafts with their essays, one wonders if the rough drafts differ substantially from the final drafts. Approximately 70 percent of our students reported they always or usually revise their work at the content level, but given that the average time spent on writing an essay was ninety minutes, what students term "revision" may merely have been editing for rewording, usage, punctuation, and spelling. The rough and final drafts have not been individually compared but doing so in future studies will provide a closer look at what our students' writing processes are and will enable us to compare this with what they report the process to be.

Table 42

Student's Use of Notes (Task 1)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Notes	15%	24%
No Notes	85	76
	100	100
	N = 430	N = 319

Table 43

Student's Use of a Draft (Task 1)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Draft	71%	65%
No Draft	29	35
	100	100
	N = 430	N = 319

Table 44

Average Time Spent Task 1 (self-reported)

In-coming	Ongoing
Mean = 98	Mean = 109
Mode = 90	Mode = 90
N = 425	N = 80

Table 45

Student's Use of Notes (Task 2)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Notes	40%	47%
No Notes	60	53
	100	100
	N = 437	N = 80

Table 46

Student's Use of a Draft (Task 2)

	In-coming	Ongoing
Draft	60%	70%
No Draft	40	30
	100	100
	N = 437	N = 80

Table 47

Average Time Spent Task 2 (self-reported)

In-coming	Ongoing
Mean = 102	Mean = 119
Mode = 90	Mode = 90
N = 429	N = 77

Table 48

Percentage of Late Papers

	In-coming	Ongoing
Task 1	1.0%	2%
Task 2	.5	0

4. Analysis of Student Texts

Generally speaking, the quality of student writing generated for a large-scale writing assessment (an "examination" of sorts, but one that "doesn't count") is predictably lower than that produced on other occasions--in the context, for example, of the student's regular writing (or other) course. Though sufficient time was provided for each student to complete a satisfactory written response for both writing tasks used in our

freshman writing assessment, and though other testing "conditions" were modified somewhat to promote ease and fluency in writing, an assessment situation remains just that--uncontextualized, impersonal, cold, without intrinsic rewards to the student or the necessary motivation to perform at one's very best. Thus, the writing samples presented below must not be presumed to be the very best writing that UTEP freshmen are capable of generating. Given more personal, more contextualized occasions for a written response, our students (like thousands of others who have been involved in large-scale assessments) would surely produce writing samples that might strike the reader as richer, more correct, more interesting, and more complex than those that have been generated for the present assessment.

Following, then, are selected sample papers produced by UTEP students in response to Task 1 and Task 2 of the Freshman Writing Assessment Project. Papers in each score category (4/4 or "8" through 1/1 or "2") are represented here and are followed by brief discussions of the student responses themselves and the holistic (H) and primary trait (PT) ratings each paper received.[2] The directions to students for each of the two writing tasks also appear below.

The 4-to-1 scoring system which we have employed for the holistic evaluation of the student essays (produced in response to Task I and Task II directions) should be thought of as a continuum of "best" papers, 4s, to those "least good," 1s. It must be remembered, too, that in holistic

---

[2]For a percentage distribution of rating levels by course designation (e.g., 3110, 3111) and by task according to both H and PT rating procedures, see Figures 1-4 at the end of this section (pp. 82-85).

evaluation there is no such thing as the top paper. So long as they exhibit a certain level of quality, papers of many sorts can receive a score of 4. The primary trait scoring system which we have also used in the Freshman Writing Assessment employs the 4-to-1 continuum as well; but each of the points on the scale for the PT approach to evaluating writing samples corresponds to a specific, circumscribed criterion on the scoring guide (see Appendix F for PT scoring guides). For example, where 4-level papers produced for Task 1 exhibit structured and complete narratives in support of the trait selected, 2-level papers only exhibit some evidence of a narrative to support the selected trait. The PT scoring system, then, concentrates wholly upon a single aspect--a rhetorical dimension--of a given piece of writing which, in the case of Task 1, reflects the degree to which a student writer has successfully structured a narrative to support (describe, discuss) a trait (e.g., honesty, sense of humor) initially isolated and identified by that writer. While other aspects of writing (organization, paragraphing, syntax, "surface features" like spelling, capitalization, punctuation) are central to the holistic evaluation process, these other dimensions are virtually irrelevant to the assigning of numerical ratings in primary trait evaluation--except insofar as they underscore or amplify the presence of the trait sought.

Directions: Task 1

> Each of us has a quality that makes us feel good about ourselves. It may be that we are honest, or that we have a good sense of humor. Whatever it is, we hope that others will recognize this trait and like us for it. Think of your many qualities, and pick one that you would most like to be appreciated for.

> Pretend that you are in a small class where no one knows each other. You have been asked to introduce yourself by writing an essay which will be read to others. In this essay, state the quality you would most like your classmates to recognize in you and tell an experience from your life that shows your being this way. Tell the experience in such a way that your classmates can clearly see the trait you have.

Both Paper A and B (pp. 54-55), received 4 ratings from each of two raters reading independently. These papers received 4/4 (or "8") ratings on both holistic (H) and primary trait (PT) scales. The holistic judgment of 4 suggests that both papers reveal a clear understanding and execution of the task assigned, as well as a direct approach toward fulfilling the demands of the assignment. Each paper is relatively brief, demonstrates a clear focus, and is marked by a sense of closure and completeness.

Both papers, too, are relatively free of surface errors: practically none exhibited in Paper B; a few punctuation and spelling errors, for example, in Paper A ("allright," "allways," "nuetral," and a few instances of the misuse of semi-colons). Paper A, however, evinces a strong sense of "voice" (a personality, a colloquial tone) and various ironical remarks add to the texture of the paper and enhance the created voice. Paper B, on the other hand, is a straightforward three-paragraph effort (beginning, middle, and end) wherein the writer in brief, uncluttered strokes identifies the trait (honesty), develops a narrative describing or dramatizing the trait, and offers a few final remarks as a sort of moral summation.

These two holistically rated papers were determined to be 4s, as well, by raters rating according to the scale designed for the PT scoring guide. Each of these papers offers a sufficiently well-structured and complete narrative which supports and develops the identified trait.

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A

If you were to ask my friends about my questionable sense of humor, they'd probably say I have a good one. But if you were to ask some of my former teachers about it, they'd probably say "What sense of humor? Why that little..."

I really haven't done that many "smart-ass" pranks, but I always get the blame. I guess there's no defense when you look guilty anyway.

Looking back, I supposed it all started when I was in the eighth grade.

One day we had a substitute for English, because our regular teacher had good ole jury duty. I kinda felt sorry for the guy, cause he looked out of place; I don't know why, but he looked like he was fresh out of college. But, as with all new things, they must be broken in. Like a new baseball glove, he was no exception.

I guess what really bugged me about the guy was his appearance. His hair was real short; it made his head look like a basketball with ears. He was also wearing some white platform shoes which had about five inches of sole. But what really got me and everybody else; was his plaid high-water pants. I was quick to go for a one-liner. "Where's the flood Noah?" I asked in a loud voice. Boy, did he get pissed. (But he got over it.) Soon the whole class was getting into the act. There was a strange feeling in the room, it was like "Open season on substitute day." Class went on like this for a while, then he gave us a hefty assignment and everybody more or less shut up.

Towards the end of the class, I started to get restless waiting for the bell to ring. I had finished my assignment so I decided to pass the time with a rubber-band and some foil wads.

In those days, a boy without a rubber-band was a sitting duck.

PT ②

My first victim was a friend of mine who had sat me cracked in the dozy. Unfortunately, I hadn't been able to repay his kindness and affection, but now I could. He was sitting across the room, but I decided, long shot or not, no good deed goes unpunished.

I aimed very carefully, cause I didn't want to hit a neutral bystander. Then I gently pulled back on the rubber-band, and let go. No, I didn't hit him, but my shot bounced off his desk and struck the wall with a loud slap.

When the thing hit, the substitute looked up and saw me trying to conceal the weapon. He then got up from the chair and walked over to where I was sitting. "Alright little boy, give it here!" he demanded. Reluctantly I handed it over to him. "And the foil" he added. So I gave him that too. Now, I felt totally defenseless.

He was mad, but I just didn't know how much. He started shaking his head at me and yelled "Shit!", "When are you little punks gonna grow up?"...

Silence filled the room with everyone in shock, especially me. "Answer me" he demanded. I was so stunned that he had cursed, I couldn't think of an answer. What a time to jump in headfirst with a one-liner. "When we get older?" I asked.

Looking back now, maybe I should have said that; but at least it taught me something:

Don't major in education.

P

453-91-1224
3110 - 62660

Honesty

B

Honesty is a very important quality. A quality that people notice and admire you for. It has always been a goal of mine to be an honest person. Honesty is a way of avoiding problems. An honest person will never get into trouble for stealing, lying, or being unfair.

More than once I have had the opportunity to cheat someone out of money. One afternoon, I was sent to the store for a gallon of milk. I gave the cashier for the milk with a five dollar bill. The cashier seemed to be in a hurry because of the long line at the checkout stand. The cashier thought I had given her a twenty dollar bill and gave me the wrong change. I walked out of the store thinking I had made an easy fifteen dollars. As I was getting into my car I was overcome by guilt. I started to think that the cashier would be reprimanded or might even lose her job. She would be fifteen dollars short when her till was counted at the end of her shift. I went back in the store and told the cashier she had made a mistake when she gave me my change. She thanked me and said most people would have kept the extra money. As I was driving home I felt very good about the way I handled the situation.

The rewards of being honest will make you feel very good about yourself. An honest person is happy and always at peace with himself.

Paper B

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Papers C and D (pp. 57-58) received 3-level ratings by raters using both H and PT scales. These papers--and most papers which received 3 ratings--identify a single quality and develop that quality by using a single example. They do so, however, with less completeness, less richness of detail than is generally exhibited in 4-level papers. While the writing in Papers C and D is smooth for the most part, the writers periodically lapse in both syntactic and grammatical domains.

In the initial paragraph of Paper C, for example, a pronoun number/agreement problem surfaces ("A person, who have little . . ."), while in Paper D a grammatical/syntactic problem surfaces in the penultimate sentence of the essay ("I do not wish to be returned for the favor."). In addition, where Paper C exhibits periodic spelling lapses ("all-together," "untill") and awkwardly or carelessly worded phrases and clauses ("She interrogated on my motives . . ."), Paper D clearly demonstrates a lack of attention to paragraphing which attenuates the degree of organization and focus this paper could have achieved. Nevertheless, while occasional lapses in mechanics and sentence structure are evident in these two papers, each succeeds in providing the reader with a clear narrative which illustrates the traits these writers have identified. Or, according to the PT scoring guide (see Appendix F.1), both Paper C and Paper D succeed in elaborating a narrative to support a trait; each, however, is sufficiently flawed, in one or more of the areas outlined in the scoring guide, resulting in the PT rating of 3.

C As I think about it, the most characteristic aspect of my personality which I'm most proud of is unquestionably my ability to understand. A person who have little comprehension of the meaning of the term might question my selection. True, that to be understanding cannot be justly put in any one of the common categorical trails. It can, however, be best compared to companionship and brotherly love.

The most vivid example in memory of my display of understanding was met in my Sophomore year of high school. I was doing a sentence outline when Miss Counsel, our English teacher, introduced a handicapped student to our class. Gary was sixteen years old, but he looked like eleven. Being bound to a wheelchair he found it difficult to adjust to his new environment. It wasn't long thereafter that he quickly withdrew from the class all-together. Gary would sit silently in his chair in the lonely forgotten corner of our room. Ostracized by both the teacher and his peers, he became an almost "double-cripple" First deprecated physically by his handicap and secondly by his secluded attitude - Gary was shackled helplessly in his mental prison.

I remembered we were heading into our 4th week of School when I asked Mrs Counsel if I could relocate to a desk next to Gary. Understandably

459-37-0852
63287

suspicious. She interrogated on my motives and I simply replied that Gary needs a friend to understand him and listen to him. Mrs Counsel continued to deliberate until she grew tired of my constant molestation and finally leaved to my request.

The first week was unquestionably the most difficult. It was a task to break through those stone walls Gary constructed around him. I understood that the walls was Gary's protection against further humiliation and painful ridicule. What I needed to do is to gain his trust. The only way to accomplish that is to be extremely patient and understanding. The days rolled into weeks and then into months, my adherence and patience was beginning to change Gary. He responded recently to my gestures and was becoming increasingly more ~~active~~ active. Gary was no longer a ~~double~~ double Handicap! ~~Even though~~

Gary moved away two months after we became best friends. In his last letter, Gary promised me that he was going to try out for his Middle School Basketball team ~~coming~~ It dawns me to realize that countless doors of opportunity will open with a little understanding

D

I believe the trait that is most recognizable is my willingness to always do someone a favor. Sometimes it is hard for me to say no. Let me share an experience to back up my claim.

It was one very cold day back in high school. The snow began falling early morning. People expected for it to taper off and eventually cease by the end of school. However the snow continued to fall rapidly all day. As I was trampling through the snow after school trying to determine which pile of snow was my car; I was approached by several of my friends. They were all preparing for a long walk home. I offered them a ride even though I was bushed and ready to get home and relax. The four of us got in my car. We were ready to leave the school when I saw four more of my friends walking because their car would not start. Knowing I had no gas, and as usual no money I offered them a ride home also. The eight of us piled in my Volkswagen and went on our way. I ran

out of gas just as I was pulling up on my street all because I could not stand to see my friends walking home in the freezing cold. I do not wish to be returned for the favor. I just want my friends to know they can count on me if they ever need anything, because I wont say "no" to them.

The two papers reproduced on pp. 60-61--Papers E and F--received rankings of 2 by each of two raters rating independently on both H and PT scales. Both of these papers succeed in identifying a trait (in the case of Paper E the writer attests to a desire "to help other people when they are having some kind of problem"; and in the case of Paper F, the writer offers ". . . this one special trait I have, which is caring"). However, neither of these traits is illustrated very clearly in a carefully developed narrative; neither presents a well-focused, elaborated illustration of the traits which have been identified.

Paper E tends to ramble on about a girl who the writer knew in high school--a girl who is, we must presume, in need of help. But no single, specific illustration of the writer's identified trait is narrated; instead, the writer relates what "we used to" do on various occasions. Similarly, Paper F takes the reader along a somewhat circuitous route toward dramatizing the trait identified as "caring."

Both papers share, too, grammatical, syntactic, and mechanical problems which tend to detract from and, at times, impede each communication. Paper E, for example, contains run-on sentences ("Their [sic] was this one girl who needed help in her free-throws, she asked me if I could help her."), awkward clausal structures ("I have experience in the field of any sport."), inflectional problems (". . . we use to practice . . ."); Paper F is marked by punctuation errors frequently involving the misuse of the comma ("I care about the feelings of people because, I have them too." and ". . . her parents were too strict on her but, they never cared to listen . . ."), inattention to paragraphing concerns (note the length, desultory nature, and needless complexity of paragraph two, for

453-09-013

E

The Quality In Me

The quality that makes me feel good about myself, is that I like to help other people when they are having some kind of problem. For instance I play all kinds of sports and I'm pretty good at it. If some body needed any help in any sport I wouldn't mind helping them. I feel that I'm qualified to help somebody, because I have experience in the field of any sport.

When I was a senior in high school. There was this one girl who needed help in her free throws, she asked me if I could help her. The only reason why she ask me was because I was the best one on the team who had a good average score. This girl needed to learn how to shoot with an arch. So... we use to practices at practices... I had to show her step by step on getting an arch when shooting free throws. We used to meet after school and used to practice for 6 hours each day. I really enjoy taking time to show her how to become better skill in her free throws.

Paper E

451-55-2156
3001-3110
62881

F

Caring

I know I am not the only one in the world that cares. But, I would like for this class to notice this one special trait I have, which is caring. What do I care about and what does it matter if I do care? Well, listen up to this essay and it will answer those questions.

I care about the feelings of people because, I have them too. It may not matter to anyone here but, to one who needs care it may matter. But, it is hard to care for everyone's feelings. I at least can say I care for people close to me who may have a sense of hurt feelings. Here is a incident which happened last year to a close friend who needed to have someone care enough to listen to her. My friend Anna had a problem with her family in letting her have some freedom with decisions in her life. Everyone felt her parents were to strict on her but, they never cared to listen to her fears. She was eventually pushed into peer pressure to drink and received a ulcer from the pressure. I finally convinced her to talk to me about her feelings cause I knew drinking would only make her problems worse. I cared enough to listen and give her some ideas towards making her life easier instead of pushing her, I pulled her closer.

I really don't know if that seems like a caring person to anyone else.

451-55-2156
3001-3110
62881

But, I'll care enough to listen why. I just hope for everyone who is here, to realize that try to understand and care. All I can say is I'm here if anyone needs me.

example), and a mixture of various other surface errors ("a ulcer," ". . . here is a incident . . .").

Despite, however, this saturation of errors (the repetition, paragraphing problems, punctuation lapses, etc.), these two papers demonstrate a competent understanding and execution of the task which was to be performed. Each paper does, as the PT scoring guide insists it must, display some evidence of a narrative to personalize and support the identified trait, but these papers clearly remain weaker than those at the 3 level for reasons mentioned above and for other reasons delimited by the PT scoring guide (see Appendix F.1 for further details regarding a PT rating of 2 for Task 1).

The sample papers on p. 63, each rated 1, are examples of unsuccessful attempts at fulfilling the demands of the assigned task. These two efforts, and numerous other papers which received ratings of 1, are brief, minimally developed, disjointed, often without a clear focus, and, generally, reflect a high density of surface errors (in spelling, punctuation, capitalization) and errors in--to cite only the major areas--syntax, diction, subject/verb agreement, and pronoun reference.

Both 1-level papers reproduced below, Papers G and H, do identify personality traits--"amability" in the case of the former, "communication with people" in the latter. Neither paper, though, succeeds in developing a single, sustained narrative to illustrate the identified trait; instead, both writers offer the reader generalized statements about themselves attempting to illustrate but not dramatize a trait:

> For example, fixing other peoples car whenever I can. I am always looking forward to have more friends, and I am always trying to conserve friendship. [Paper G]

453-47-4102
3110-62660

G

My Friendly Way To Treat Friends.

Even though, I don't like fights, I know of a weapon that gives amazing results. That is Amability. I consider myself as a person who is always glad to be help. For example, fixing other peoples car whenever I can. I am always looking formard to have more friends, and I am disc always trying to conserve friendship. Furthermore, I consider sharing a very important factor in friendship, therefore, egoism is not my style. Also as a weak human being I make lots of mistakes; However, I learn from and I try to improve them. I think of racial descrimination as a very stupid thing; ~~therefore~~ therefore, I try to be friendly with everyone around me.

Paper G

H

In my opinion my communication with people is the quality I do well. In high school were I would talk to a list of people, I was still considered the shy type. where I really began to communicate was in my summer job. It was a pleasure talking to senior citizens, I really learned a lot. But it wasn't until orientation were I notice I wasn't afraid to talk to people. I wasn't worryed about saying something dumb. I have also changed for the better at home. I have gotten closer to my family. They know more about me which I was afraid to tell them before.

Paper H

> But it wasn't until orientation were [sic] I notice I wasn't afraid to talk to people. I wasn't worryed about saying something dumb. I have also changed for the better at home. [Paper H]

Because these two papers reveal no evidence of developing a narrative to illustrate or support the identified trait, both papers received 1s from readers rating according to PT criteria as well (see Appendix F.1).

> Directions: Task II
>
> It is said that advertisers have a reason for everything they put in an ad. The background, the position of every object, and the type of person appearing in the ad are carefully planned. The words used to advertise the product are also selected for specific purposes.
>
> Attached are two ads. They are for the same cigarette brand, yet each ad is somewhat different. Compare and contrast the two ads. Who are the advertisers trying to sell their products to? What appeals are being used in each ad to persuade this audience? What specific details in each ad accomplish these appeals?
>
> Write an essay in which you report your analysis of the two ads. (Refer to Appendix B.1.b for copies of the two ads.)

While Papers I (pp. 65-66) and J (pp. 67-68) are not singularly well developed or well structured comparison/contrast essays, they are sufficiently well written--rich in many respects--to have received 4/4 (or "8") ratings on both H and PT scales. Each of these papers (1) demonstrates a relatively high degree of linguistic sophistication, (2) exhibits a clear focus on the advertisements with carefully chosen supporting detail, and (3) evinces a well-organized, direct approach to the required task, as well as a clear understanding and execution of that task.

Both of these papers offer general statements about advertising and the advertising process in their introductory paragraphs, thus providing

Final Copy "The Advantage of Vantage"

I

Advertising is a device used to reach human desires and needs. Often, advertisers determine the requisites of the public and can therefore undermine their thoughts. By appealing to the "macho" side of a man, a company can sell a deodorant that, supposedly, makes you feel like Robert Redford. Ridiculous as it may sound, advertisers can talk you into buying something you have no use for. Every single item that goes into an ad has been carefully selected to convince. Even two ads from the same company may appeal to different audiences and differ in other ways. For example, these two ads promoting the same brand of Vantage cigarettes may be aiming for different audiences and tastes.

The wording used in these

ads has much to do with who it appeals to. The ad on art tends to draw attention to a public who wants success. The emphasis is on the hard work you put in and how it paid off. The ad about the sea, on the other hand, attracts the adventurer who seeks an inner personal goals. One ad stresses a success in life, while the other stresses a success of the mind.

Sex is widely used in advertising to appeal to male and female consumers. The woman on one ad attracts the male population by drawing pictures of romantic actions in their heads. The other ad draws attention to the handsome sea-lover. Maybe the woman was chosen for her happy but serious sense of accomplishment, while the man was chosen for his

relaxed look of self-satisfaction.

Positioning of surrounding objects can, and usually do, contribute to the overall effect. The girl in an art room, holding paintbrushes may signify a success in her art exhibition. The man holding a sword handle, with the refreshing sea and mountains in the background, may represent freedom to explore.

The art and sea ads are similarly aiming for the desire in everyone to reach a specific goal. The art ad tries to touch on and relate to the professional while the sea ad reaches for the need we have for a unique, pleasureable success.

In there own way, both ads appeal to a need within us. While one attracts one audience

the other attracts the remaining half. By relating to our lives and our necessities, advertisers, with a skill, eventually get the best of us.

888-00-0219

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J

You're standing in line at a check-out counter of a grocery store. Bored of waiting, you borrow a magazine from a nearby stand. Realizing that the line is moving faster than usual you start to skim the magazine. Suddenly you start to flip back, page by page, looking for a certain ad. Ah, there she is, the goddess with the rich tan. what a great way to sell tanning lotion!

The FIRST hurdle an advertiser must jump in making a successful ad is to develope an image or message which must jump out to the readers eyes and convince him to continue the rest of the ad.

In regard to the two cigarette ads, the advertiser uses an attractive lady in one ad and a handsome man in the other. In the titles to the messages of the ads, "Making your mark" and "A rich reward", they both arouse an INTEREST upon reading. You would probably ask yourself, what kind of mark?, or how good is her mark? Already

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the simple title may have caught your attention, then, having you continue the rest of the message. The words "rich and reward are attractive because they project a sense of monetary value. The reader's imagination begins to inter-act with the message and the detail in the picture.

Most people have a tendency to associate themselves with an ad because they have something in common. The "artist" ad seems to be directed to women who see themselves as talented or skillfull, intellegent and independent. A women who "thinks" before she acts. The message takes you back into your own history where you had once succeeded in your accomplishments. The posture of the lady in the picture, her smile, the used paint brushes, all project a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Here the artist seems to be taking a cigarette break from her work. She admires her work as she injoys her cigarette. She projects a simple artist

Paper J

(3)

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with an impressive background. So audience, take it from somebody who's a thinker and into detail, smoke Vantage!

The "scuba diver" ad is probably directed mostly to men. The pictured diver is handsome + tough, a curious explorer, daring but cautious, and not easily pleased. Most men would most likely associate themselves with this character-type. The picture alone would catch an eye. The setting is fresh and relaxing, it invites adventure and shows satisfaction. The picture shows the equipment he uses to accomplish his task. He is knowledgeable of the levels of qualities in equipment and is aware of the dangers underwater, so he settles for nothing but the best. So again audiences, take it from an expert, don't settle for anything else but the best. Smoke Vantage!

Paper J, continued

the reader with the sense of a larger context beyond the immediacy of the two ads themselves (see Appendix F.2 for the PT scoring guide for Task 2). The context constructed in the opening paragraphs of Paper J, for example, functions at once as an introduction to the issues to be explored in the body of the paper and as an alluring, rhetorically sophisticated, direct appeal to the writer's audience:

> You're standing in line at a check-out counter of a grocery store. Bored of waiting, you borrow a magazine from a nearby stand. Realizing that the line is moving faster than usual, you start to skim the magazine. Suddenly you start to flip back, page by page, looking for a certain ad. Ah, there she is . . .

Each of these essays is structured, roughly, according to formal comparison/contrast principles and patterns: Paper I, on the one hand, proceeds according to a point-by-point analysis of such aspects of the two ads as "the wording used," the use of sex, the "positioning of surrounding objects," the desire in people "to reach a specific goal"; Paper J, on the other hand, provides more of a subject-by-subject (or "chunk") approach to the analysis discussing, in separate paragraphs, such areas as the photographs of the people involved, the linguistic content or "message" of the two ads, and the various associations triggered off in the writer by the two ads (e.g., "The 'artist' ad seems to be directed to women who see themselves as talented or skillfull [sic], intelligent and independent.").

While both of these essays are well organized--with clearly demarcated introductions and several "body" paragraphs, only the writer of Paper I delivers a concluding paragraph that succeeds in providing the reader with a requisite sense of psychological closure. Relatively free of surface errors (a few instances of spelling --"develope," "easly"--and punctuation

lapses do occur), these papers are free, too, of the deeper problems in form, style, grammar, and syntax, for example, that lower level papers consistently exhibit.

What distinguishes the 3-level response from the 4-level comparison/contrast essay has, essentially, proved to be the depth of the response: the quality and number of appeals discussed, the relevancy or significance of the various aspects of the ads considered, and the citation of the larger advertising context which frames the response. And so, while there is ample evidence that Papers K and L (pp. 71-72) attempt an analysis of the two ads by way of the comparison/contrast route, it is equally evident that neither of these papers provides an in-depth examination of the ads and their appeals with sufficient attention to details and with specific references to either pictorial or linguistic environment. Thus, these papers received 3/3 (or "6") ratings from each of two raters using both H and PT scales (refer to PT scoring guide for Task 2; see Appendix F.2).

While Paper K provides the reader with an introductory section seeming to delineate a broader context beyond the two ads themselves, and Paper L does not, the former's attempt to contextualize the analysis fails to achieve its purpose because the statements offered are repetitive, diffuse, and unfocused. In addition, neither paper provides the reader with any sense of closure except by way of these highly mechanical, rudimentary, single-sentence summaries:

> Both articles are well written but each one deals with different buyers and different successes. [Paper K]
>
> These advertisements stress success because they want people to know that 'Vantage' is success. [Paper L]

K

The ads are dealing with the same category. Success is a key word in both of the ads. An ad is used to make people buy the product. In an advertising article the people advertising the product want to make the article interesting. Interesting enough, in a sense so the buyers will become interested in the product. If they do, the buyers will go out and buy the product. This is what advertisers want; they want to sell the product to the buyers through advertising. These two advertising articles are for the same brand, yet each one deals with success of some kind. They are different types of success. It depends on what the person in the article has succeeded in.

In the first article, the advertisers are trying to sell their product to the younger generation who have succeeded in their goals. Their career was fulfilled with a lot of hard work and time. But they look as though it was worth it. The first article also is trying to appeal to the male people who view this article. A man should be attracted to the article because it's about a woman who is successful. It's about a woman who started out at the bottom and has worked on put her work and capability to work. She kept on working and has succeeded. So a male person sees this article he will read it and become aware of what is being advertised. In the

second article the advertisers are trying to sell their product to the female buyers. The article is about a man who seems well off. He seems healthy and built. He is the type of man who is leisure yet aggresive and assertive towards success. The article catches the eye of the female buyers. A man who has goals of success which are succeeded all by himself in special ways. Both articles are well written but each one deals with different buyers and different successes.

Call # 63443
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Writing Assignment #2

L

"Vantage. The Taste of Success" is the slogan used in both advertisements. Both are trying to sell a brand of cigarettes called Vantage. In both of these advertisements it is stressed that Vantage is the cigarette that gives a sense of accomplishment or "Success." Although in both advertisements, the people that appear have accomplish a great task, the self-satisfaction of knowing one has done something worth while is enough reason to smoke Vantage. Even though both advertisements are for Vantage, the appeal of the product is different.

In the first advertisement a women is seen with paint brushes in one hand and a cigarette in the other. It looks as though she is looking in her past and looking at what she had to go through to get where she is today. She is dressed in an old painting jacket that has stains of paint on it. Her paint brushes look old and worn down. Her jacket and her brushes are to show that she has worked hard to get where she is today which gives her an expression of self-satisfaction. This is to appeal to the person who has put a fight and been through alot to get successful. This is for the person who has not had it easy, but who has done it anyway.

The second advertisement shows a scuba diver who has just found an old relic. To this man, his work is his sport which is shown by the mountains and the ocean. He can spend days doing what he likes to do best. Today is special to him because he found something, something he has been looking for, for a long time. He is looking at it as though he cannot believe it. Because he found it, today is not just a good day, today is a great day. This scuba diver can represent any man or women who ~~do~~ did a bit more than expected at work or who scored a little bit higher in a sport. He symbolizes the initiative to accomplish a little bit more than usual.

These advertisements stress success ~~because~~ because they want people to know that "Vantage" is success.

In considering these 3-level papers just a bit more closely, according to holistic criteria, it becomes evident in Paper K, for example, that the writer has not attended to matters of syntax and diction very carefully (e.g., "He is the type of man who is leisure yet aggressive and assertive towards success."), nor has the writer succeeded in paragraphing the essay in a manner which might have added strength and focus to the argument presented. Paper L, too, exhibits some surface errors ("worth while," "alot") as well as other problems in such areas as inflection (". . . the people that appear have accomplish a great task . . .") and syntax. Paper L is further diminished by an occasional infelicitously phrased, unintentionally elliptical sentence ("To this man, his work is his sport which is shown by the mountains and the ocean."). Nevertheless, Papers K and L, though lacking in their depth of presentation, in completeness, and in the delineation (at beginning and end) of the broader context concerning some aspect(s) of the nature of advertising, successfully reveal an analysis of the two ads in the comparison/contrast mode.

According to the PT scoring guide (see Appendix F.2), 2-level papers reflect some evidence of analytical writing in the comparison/contrast mode; however, though the writer has succeeded in performing the basic task of comparing/contrasting the two ads, the analytic demands of the assignment remain unfulfilled for at least one of several possible reasons.

Paper M (p. 74) is an example of a minimally proficient compare/contrast analysis. The analysis involves very few details from either Vantage ad and much of the paper (the single long sentence which concludes the first paragraph) is concerned with a very minor detail common to all cigarette ads--the warning statement situated in the lower left-hand corner

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3110-68998

Compare / Contrast

M

One comparison in these two ads is the accomplishment they have made, so they are being rewarded with "The Taste of Success." Also, the word usage in each ad shows similar thought, that you have finally reached your goal. The looks on their faces show happiness in what they are doing, also a comparison. They show a quiet, and calm atmosphere in both pictures. most important of all, they put the "little" ad in the bottom left hand corner to show that it is dangerous to your health!

On the other hand, I feel that the first ad is trying to sell the product to the more private, individualistic person. while, the second ad is trying to sell to the more out-going person.

Paper M

of each ad.

Awkwardly phrased, unintentionally elliptical sentences, which tend to impede reader comprehension, appear throughout this brief essay ("One comparison in these two ads is the accomplishment they [sic] have made, so they [sic] are being rewarded . . ."). Other problems in spelling ("hapiness"), punctuation ("The looks on their faces show hapiness in what they are doing, also a comparison."), and pronoun reference (the writer uses the pronoun they or their some seven times in the first paragraph without either a clear or consistent referent) detract from the fluency and clarity of the analysis. The second and final paragraph simply contrasts, in a highly truncated manner (though in a rather incisive pair of sentences), the intended audience for each cigarette ad.

In summary, Paper M is too brief, too haphazardly organized, and too erratic at the sentence and surface levels of the presentation to warrant a ranking higher than 2/2 (or "4") on either of the two scales employed.

Like Paper M, Paper N (p. 76) contains evidence of the use of the comparison/contrast mode in constructing what proves to be a sketchy and unfocused analysis of the two cigarette ads. Though the writer has employed transitional phrases (and larger syntactic units) which scaffold the comparison/contrast approach--"the first ad," "both ads reflects" [sic], "It seems to me that the second ad is more idialistic than the second [sic] ad.", the paper could not possibly receive a rating higher than 2/2 (or "4") on the PT scale. Furthermore, because few details are offered (except in the third from final paragraph where the writer briefly discusses certain of ". . . the key words that are being used in each ad to persuade . . ."), because generalizations have been left unsupported, and

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3001-3110
62991

N

"You're tasting success and it sure tastes good."

The first ad shows a worker woman achieving what every person dreams about, such as success, talent. All the main facts that you need in order to see the product of your hard working through all the years and finally you

In the second ad a man appears with a smile of success. It seems to be more idialistic, dreaming with nature, admiring the sunken wrecks, looking for history, trying to reach success, looking for adventures.

Both ads reflects the key of success that always attract people's attention including the good taste, that in this case the taste of success is vantage

It seems to me, that the second ad is more idialistic than the second ad. It says more about the fulings of the person.

The impression I got from this ads is that the advertisers are trying to sell their product to a hard working

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people that always try to look for article that makes them feel good about themselves.

I think that the key words that are being used in each ad to persuade this audience are talent, changed your life, satisfaction and the main phrase is "you're tasting success and it sure taste good. People always look for things and phrases that makes them feel good about themselves.

The advertisers look for hints that attract the attention of the audience, by involving well pretty women and of course good looking man to present their product.

They think that by buying the product their physical appearance or their intellectual being will become exactly as the one of the person who is presenting the product.

because the presentation is poorly organized and disjointed--lacking cohesiveness and seeming almost randomly structured, the paper clearly falls within the 2-level category according to both PT and H dictates.

In looking at the paper more closely (holistically), the reader finds a wide variety of surface errors and deeper problems--at lexical, sentence, and discourse levels--in such areas as these: spelling ("idialistic," "intelectual"), diction ("a worker woman"), inflection ("Both ads reflects . . ."), parallel structure ("by involving . . . pretty women and of course good looking man . . ."), punctuation ("The first ad shows . . . what every person dreams about, such as success, talent."), paragraph development, and cohesion (note, for example, in paragraph two and between the penultimate and final paragraphs how crude the semantic and syntactic links are between sentences). Surely, this kind of concatenation of error attenuates, overall, the writer's attempt at fulfilling the analytic demands of Task 2.

Papers P and Q (p. 78) are representative 1-level essays.[3] Each of these 1/1 (or "2") papers exhibits an unsatisfactory--incomplete and insufficiently developed--response to the demands of the task but for somewhat different reasons. Paper P, for example, makes no attempt whatever at an analysis of the two cigarette ads through the comparison/contrast mode. In Paper P nothing is compared, nothing contrasted; rather, two brief paragraphs concentrate sketchily upon what cigarette advertisers attempt to do and what consumers are supposed to feel if they smoke (e.g., "The tobacco gets better as each year or generation passes by." and "It is

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[3]The letter "O" has been avoided here (and throughout) to eliminate possible confusion between the zero point on either rating scale and the designation of a sample student paper.

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3110 - 62447

P

The advertisers are trying to sell the product of cigarettes to both men and women. They are also saying that its acceptable in society. The youths of today are doing it. The tobacco gets better as each year or generation passed by.

It is said that its a great way to make you relax and even helps you to concentrate better. Even though a lot of people smoke cigarettes there is still the warning on its label saying that it is dangerous to your health. Like all things are good yet the results are not always to ones benefit.

000-58 87 57
3110 - 62 561

Q

Trying to compare a Cigarette brand with to diffent people and too diffeant goals.

The first add shows a woman smoking a cigarette. getting ready for her night out. Gallery shows. and it looks like she is confident she is going to do well for her show. This add is for people who thought they couldn't do well but with a little work they could do well and be confident.

The second picture add. talks of a man who sets his goals then goes after them. This picture adds it for the people who know what they want and will go after it. and it seems he had found his goal.

said that its a great way to make you relax . . ."). And so, according to the PT scale (see Appendix F.2) this paper could be designated a 1-level response and no more.

Moreover, because no specifics (no facts, no details) have been offered by the writer, no generalizations made have been supported by evidence from either ad, no sense of an organizational design is apparent, and the rhetorical demands of the task--explicitly stated in the instructions--have neither been understood nor successfully executed, Paper P has received a 1-level (1/1 or "2") ranking as well from raters rating this paper holistically. Surface errors in spelling ("cigarrettes") and punctuation, as well as deeper structural problems in the areas of syntax and coherent or logical self-expression (e.g., "Like all things are good yet the results are not always to ones benefit."), cohesion (see paragraph two), and pronoun reference ("They are also saying that its acceptable in society. The youths of today are doing it."), all militate against the clear presentation of even the relatively simple ideas generated by this writer.

Where Paper P fails utterly to compare and contrast the two Vantage ads, Paper Q offers <u>minimal</u> evidence of an analysis of the ads by the comparison/contrast method. What we shall label paragraph one is a single sentence fragment with which the writer has attempted to structure the body of the paper (two additional thin paragraphs): "Trying to compare a cigarette brand. with to different people, and too different goals." [<u>sic</u>] Following this introductory fragment is a paper replete with surface errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. While there are no indentations to signal new paragraphs to the reader, there are, in a very

short space, numerous problems in syntax, cohesion (see paragraph or "chunk" two), and pronoun reference identification (e.g., "Thier picture add [sic] is for people who know what they want and will go after it. and it seems he has found his goal."). In short, the writer of Paper Q has failed to demonstrate a mastery of the conventions of standard written English. Therefore, according to holistic (and PT) criteria, the paper is designated a 1/1 (or "2").

4.1. Frequency Distribution of Ratings. The figures which follow this section provide bar graphs of the frequency distribution of ratings, expressed as percentages (see figures 1-4, pp. 82-85). Reported separately are the two tasks, the two types of ratings (holistic and Primary Trait), and the three levels of composition classes.

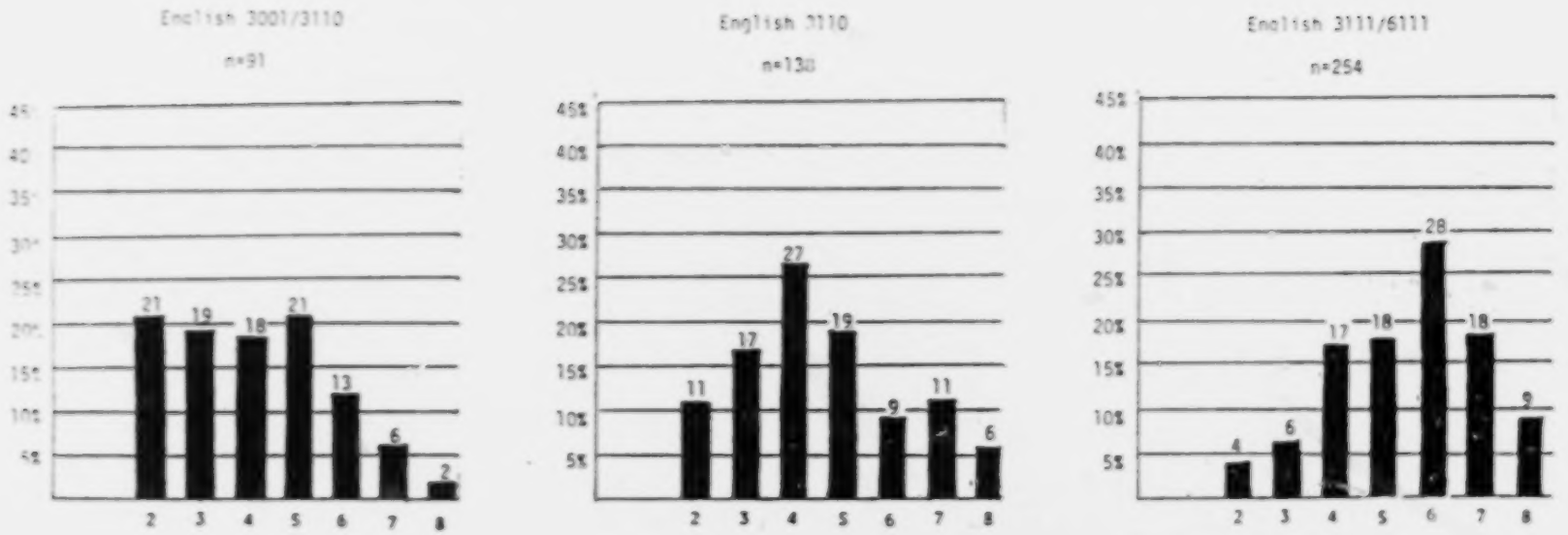
Predictably, the overall writing quality (on either task, evaluated by either rating method) appears to increase with the course level. Regular English 3110 students, as a group, tend to write better than 3001/3110 students; likewise, English 3111/6111 students appear to write better than 3110 students. At the same time, there seems to be a fairly high percentage of students (20 to 30 percent) in each course who, on a particular writing task, either write better than might be expected for 3001/3110 and 3110 students, or worse than expected for 3111 students. If, for example, we assume that English 3111/6111 students should be writing papers with a combined rating of at least 5, then holistic ratings of Task 1 would suggest that as many as 27 percent of the students are misplaced. But are these students really misplaced? Did some of them do better on Task 2? Would additional samples, written in response to different tasks

with different cognitive demands, give a more accurate picture of their abilities? Are they students who, while performing at a lower level than their peers, completed the prerequisite for English 3111 by passing English 3110? Conversely, are the better writers in English 3110 self-placed students who enrolled in the lower-numbered course despite high test scores? Are they course repeaters? Is it possible that registration procedures sometimes permit students to enroll in classes for which they are not qualified? Finally, are the TSWE and ACT-English scores sufficiently reliable placement instruments? These data suggest significant questions for further research and, eventually, for institutional decisions.

Several other features of the frequency distributions seem worthy of comment. First, students at all levels appear to have scored higher on Task 2 than on Task 1 when evaluated according to Primary Trait criteria. There are several possible explanations for this result: Task 2 may have been more clearly worded than Task 1; Task 2 may have been easier for writers to structure than Task 1, resulting in more essays that were obviously responsive to the rhetorical demands; Task 2 may actually have been less demanding cognitively than Task 1; or Task 2 may have been more like the school tasks that students are accustomed to. Further, the extra time allotted for completion of Task 2 may have allowed many students to write better structured essays. Even though students did not report using more time to write the essays in response to Task 2, they did have more gestation time on the second Task. A second observation also relates to Primary Trait scoring. By its very nature, this method of ranking tends to produce less regular distributions than the approximately bell-shaped

Figure 1

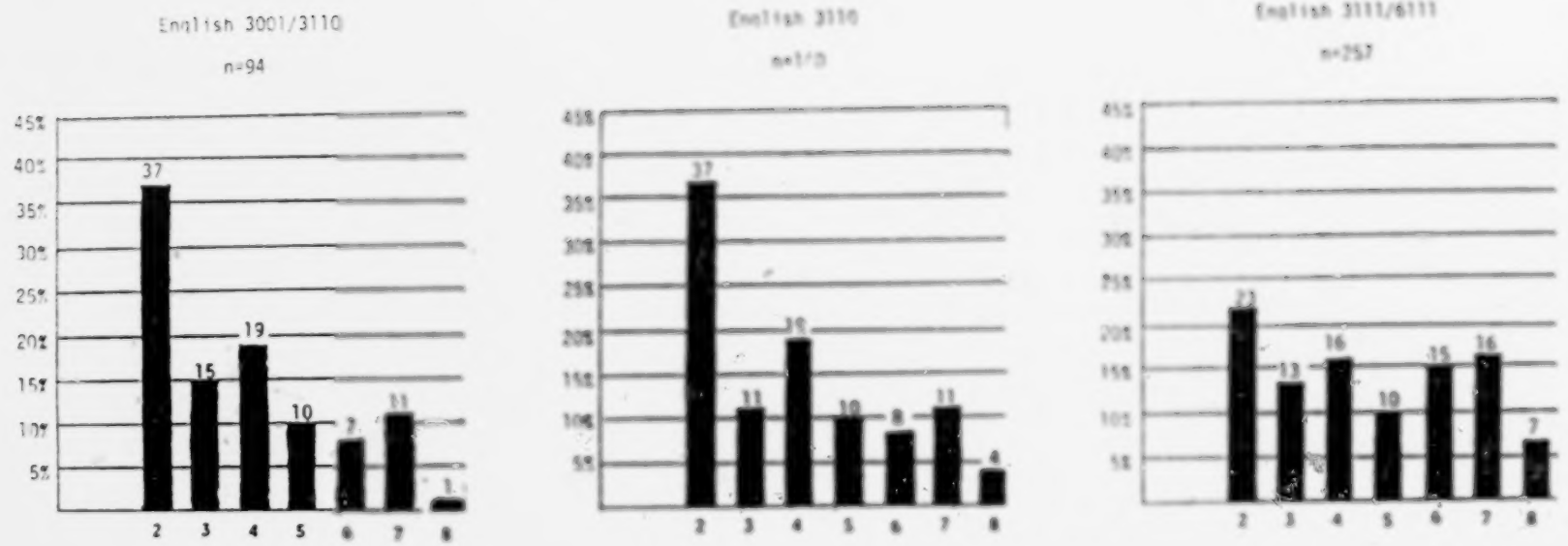
Frequency Distribution of Holistic Ratings on Task 1



Ratings on papers 2 - 8*

Figure 2

Frequency Distribution of Primary Trait Ratings on Task 1



Ratings on Papers 2 - 8*

Figure 3

Frequency Distribution of Holistic Ratings on Task 2

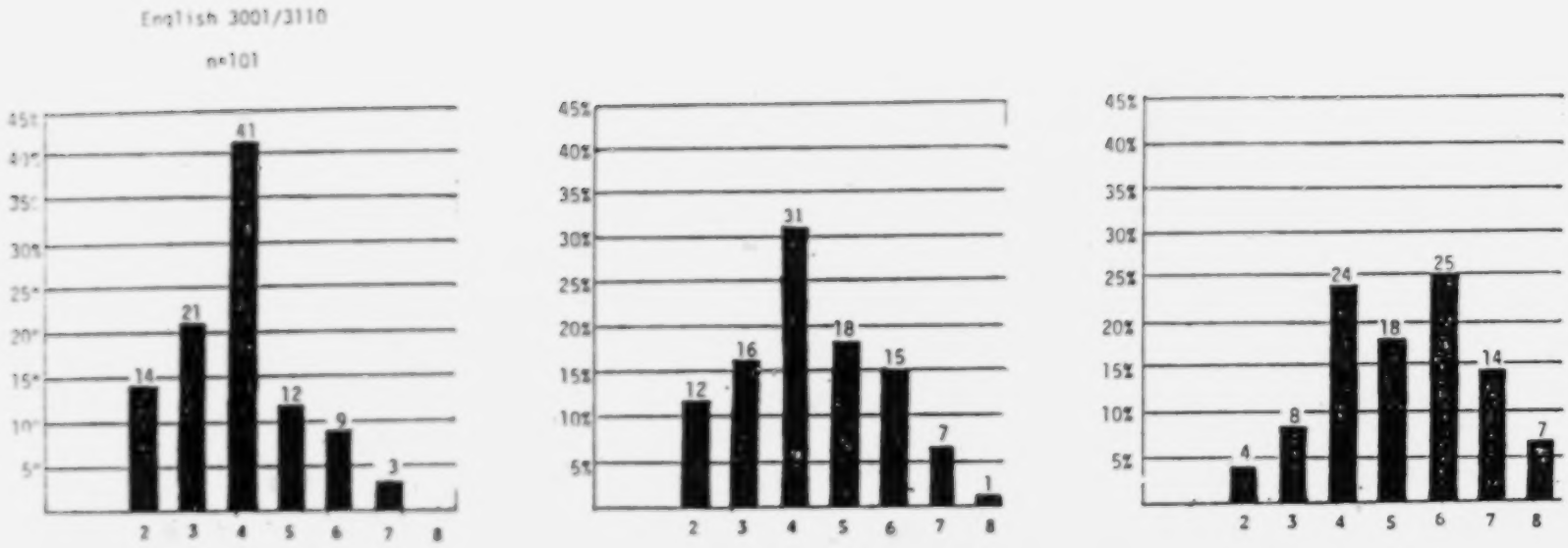
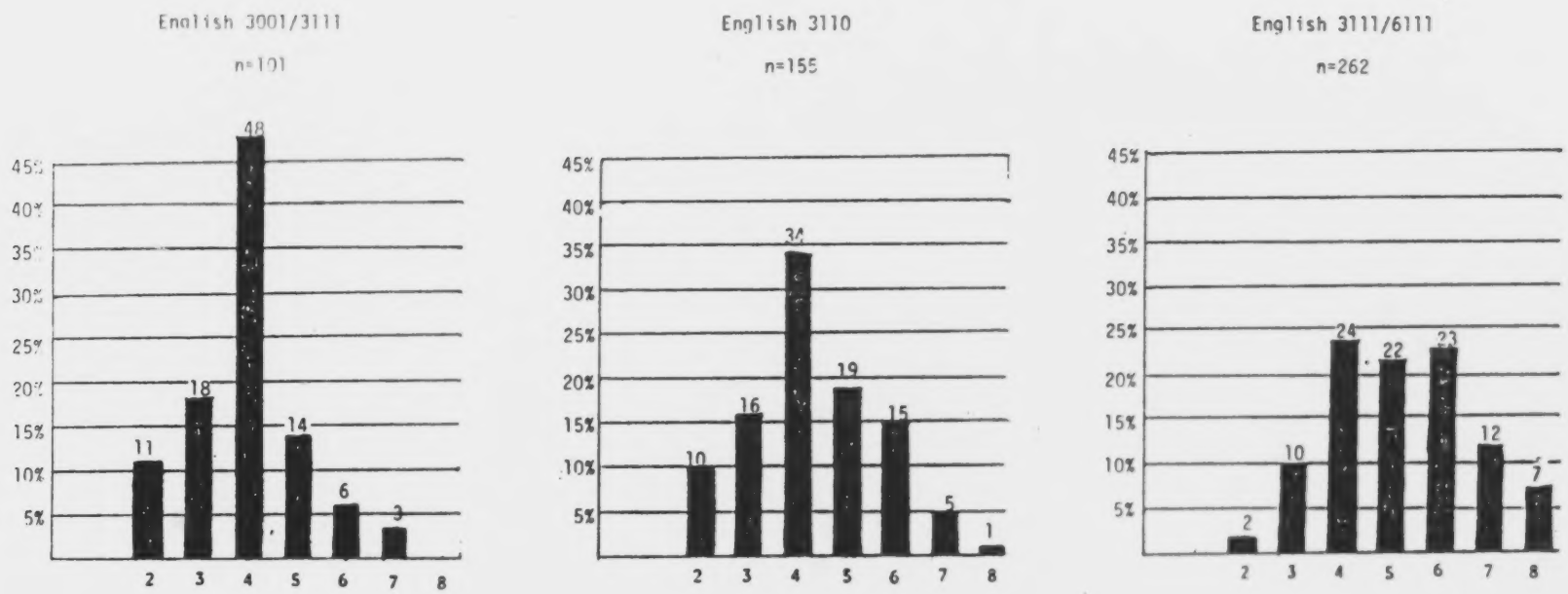


Figure 4

Frequency Distribution of Primary Trait Ratings on Task 2



* A 2 paper means two raters rated the paper a 1.
An 8 paper means two raters rated the paper a 4.

curves typical of holistic ratings. (In the UT El Paso Writing Assessment, this effect is particularly apparent on Task 1.) At first glance, Primary Trait scoring might thus appear to be especially valuable for placement purposes, since it tends to separate student populations into groups that are clearly able or less able, rather than requiring a more or less arbitrary cutoff point near the middle of a bell curve. It should be remembered, however, that the Primary Trait criteria focus on a rather narrow dimension of writing performance that may not give sufficient information about the overall quality of a given writing sample. A final observation concerning the frequency distributions: in the UT El Paso Writing Assessment, the distributions for holistic and Primary Trait scoring are quite different for Task 1, but become highly similar for Task 2. This result suggests that the wording of Task 2 made the rhetorical dimension (Primary Trait) of comparison/contrast analysis particularly strong, to the point that it influenced the holistic grading sessions.

5. Analysis of Surface Features

Sixty student papers, twenty from each course level (3110/3001, regular 3110, and 3111/6111), were selected for extensive study of surface features. (See above, section 1.6, for a discussion of the procedures used; see also Appendix D.) We selected for specific study certain recurrent problems of many freshman composition students. Many of those listed in Tables 49-64 are self-explanatory, but some expanded definitions may be helpful. The term Fragments refers to sentence fragments, grammatical elements (such as phrases or subordinate clauses) which conventionally may not stand alone as complete sentences, but which are

punctuated as such. Run-ons refers to independent clauses incorrectly joined, either by no punctuation at all or by a comma rather than a period or semicolon. Garbled Sentences denotes a category reserved for sentences where various constructions are begun but left unfinished, or where conventional structures are confusingly conflated. Incorrect Tense Markers includes any nonstandard tense form, such as an omitted -ed in regular past tense or a misused principal part of irregular verbs (e.g., "had went"); Hypercorrections, frequently used in the expression of language learners, includes -ed or past participle form employed after modal auxiliaries or infinitive with to in a past tense clause, where standard dialect uses the base or infinitive form of the verb (e.g., "did wanted" or ("to wanted"). Subject/Verb Errors refers exclusively to errors in agreement between subject and verb, while Wrong Case, Faulty Agreement, and Faulty Reference refer to misused pronouns. Thus "he want" would be classed as a subject/verb error, while "A student shouldn't write in their book" would be an example of faulty agreement and a vague pronoun without obvious referent would be counted as faulty reference. In a similar manner, most spelling errors were classified as general spelling errors (Misspelled Words), but special categories of frequent occurrence were identified separately as Homonym Errors, including frequently confused groups such as to/too/two and there/their, and Misused Apostrophes.

For the most part, the results of the analysis of surface features were unsurprising: papers of English 3110/3001 students exhibited more deviations from standard, edited written English than those of English 3110 students, who in turn produced more surface-feature errors than English 3111/6111 students. In counting of total words and total sentences in

students' essays, however, the results did not accord with common-sense prediction. Although it would be misleading to claim that length alone is an index to quality of writing, the length of a piece of writing may serve as a crude indicator of fluency, depth of development, and overall composing skill. Thus it would be expected that, on the average, length of essays would increase with the level of the course. Nevertheless, our results show that the English 3110/3001 papers we sampled were slightly longer than the English 3110 papers, while English 3111/6111 papers were longer than those in either of the lower-ability groups. Given the small size of our subsample, we would caution against attributing enormous significance to these results.

It should be noted, for example, that the longest paper in our subsample by an English 3110/3001 student was over 100 words longer than the longest paper by an English 3110 student--a possible sampling anomaly that, in a group of only twenty papers, would affect the mean. At the same time, on virtually all the features under consideration, there appears to be relatively little difference between 3110/3001 students and regular 3110 students. There likewise is a slightly greater, but still small, difference between 3110 students and 3111/6111 students. It is noticeable that the number of total surface feature errors declines, on the average, as the course level rises; perhaps, if a running total were kept, some clear differences would emerge in the writing at each level. On the whole, however, we doubt this. The counting of surface feature errors, in itself, simply does not seem to tell us much about our students' writing, probably because focusing on this aspect of writing is ultimately reductive.

Perhaps the most obvious comment to make about the various error counts is the relatively small number of surface errors recorded, on the average, in any category at any level. Sentence fragments are a perennial source of frustration for composition teachers, and bulk large in remedial workbooks and handbooks; yet only 3110/3001 students produced a mean of 1.0 fragments per piece. Similarly, the "least able" group wrote fewer than two run-ons and made about five and one-half punctuation errors per essay, while their "most able" peers wrote a little more than one and a half run-ons and made approximately three and one-third punctuation errors. Even allowing for differences in length of pieces produced by each group, the frequency of errors remains small. For example, English 3110/3001 students produced run-ons on the average of about one every 6.66 sentences; English 3110 students, about every 6.05 sentences; and English 3111/6111 students, about every 10.9 sentences. Similarly, incorrect tense forms appeared about once in 550 words for 3110/3001 students, once in 609 words for 3110 students, and once in 930 words for 3111/6111 students.

The error counts reported here are admittedly rather crude: we did not, for this phase of the assessment, compare "best" and "worst" papers (examining "1-level" and "4-level" papers, for example). Such a comparison would, no doubt, produce more striking differences. Further, we did not at this point attempt more sophisticated analysis of surface features, such as T-unit counts, cohesion analyses, and counts of particular grammatical constructions, which might give insight into structural and stylistic sophistication or lack of sophistication. Instead, we were seeking to discover whether some obvious, easily quantifiable surface feature characteristics could account for our students' placement in the various

courses in our sequence. We were also examining the widely-held belief that attention to surface feature errors should be the major curricular goal of remedial and developmental courses. Both hypotheses would appear to be extremely dubious given the results of the analysis.

The evidence from this subsample clearly indicates that what distinguishes the writing abilities of 3110/3001, 3110, and 3111/6111 students cannot be reduced to those readily isolatable surface features that we have identified, but rather must be located in broader concerns such as organization, style, development, and content. Placing a student in English 3110/3001 for writing one fragment, or making five punctuation errors rather than three, would be patently foolish; similarly, making the goal of English 3110 the reduction of run-ons per essay from 1.8 to 1.55 would be trivial. Instead, we would refer the reader to Section 4 of this chapter, above, in which individual student papers are discussed from a variety of perspectives. Certainly departures from the conventions of edited written English are annoying and distracting to readers, may occasionally impede communication, and may be destructive of the writer's ethos as a competent, knowledgeable adult. At the same time, "errors" would seem to be more obvious, and more devastating to the writer's attempt to establish credibility, when the more global features--organization, development, coherence, "richness"--are also weak. Conversely, isolatable "errors" appear to be less distracting, less debilitating, when they occur in the context of generally clear, fluent, well-organized and well-developed discourse. Thus, the results reported in this section both illustrate a psychological truth about readers (that their judgment of a piece of writing is affected, primarily, by higher-level features) and

suggest a pedagogical strategy--one that focuses primarily on those higher-level features, which are the central concerns in the composing process, rather than on the reduction of "errors" *per se*.

Table 49

Total Words in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	226.8	219	182.7	278.9
Median	199	198	173	223.5
Mode	115	146	134	157
Range	88 - 650	99 - 456	88 - 348	124 - 650
Standard Deviation	105.2	89.0	63.2	135.2
Skewness	1.7	1.0	1.0	1.3
Number of Cases	61	20	19	20

Table 50

Total Sentences in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	14.5	13	10.9	16.9
Median	12	11	10.0	14.0
Mode	11	7	6.0	13.0
Range	4 - 60	5 - 32	4 - 27	8 - 39
Standard Deviation	9.2	6.4	6.1	7.7
Skewness	2.5	1.4	1.3	1.4
Number of Cases	61	20	19	20

Table 51

Number of Fragments in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.6
Median	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.3
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 8	0 - 3	0 - 8	0 - 2
Standard Deviation	1.3	1.0	1.9	0.8
Skewness	3.0	0.5	3.3	0.9
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 52

Number of Run-ons in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	1.8	1.95	1.8	1.55
Median	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5
Mode	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Range	0 - 6	0 - 5	0 - 4	0 - 6
Standard Deviation	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.5
Skewness	0.8	0.5	0.5	1.6
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 53

Number of Garbled Sentences in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4
Median	1.9	1.9	1.3	2.25
Mode	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0
Range	0 - 8	0 - 6	0 - 7	0 - 8
Standard Deviation	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0
Skewness	0.8	0.7	0.9	1.1
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 54

Number of Incorrect Noun Plurals in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.1	0.2	0	0
Median	0.03	0.1	0	0
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 2	0 - 2	0	0
Standard Deviation	0.4	0.6	0	0
Skewness	5.3	2.9	0	0
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 55

Number of Incorrect Tense Markers in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
Median	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 3	0 - 3	0 - 2	0 - 2
Standard Deviation	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7
Skewness	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 56

Number of Hypercorrections in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.1	0.05	0.2	0
Median	0.03	0.03	0.1	0
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 1	0 - 1	0 - 1	0
Standard Deviation	0.3	0.2	0.4	0
Skewness	3.6	4.5	2.0	0
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 57

Number of Subject/Verb Errors in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.4	0.55	0.3	0.25
Median	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 5	0 - 5	0 - 1	0 - 2
Standard Deviation	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.55
Skewness	3.9	3.4	1.2	2.2
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 58

Number of Wrong Case in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15
Median	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 1	0 - 1	0 - 1	0 - 1
Standard Deviation	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Skewness	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.1
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 59

Number of Faulty Agreement in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.1	0.15	0	0.15
Median	0.03	0.1	0	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 2	0 - 2	0	0 - 2
Standard Deviation	0.4	0.5	0	0.5
Skewness	4.2	3.4	0	3.4
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 60

Number of Faulty Reference in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	1.5	1.75	0.8	1.8
Median	0.8	1.25	0.3	1.2
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 7	0 - 6	0 - 6	0 - 7
Standard Deviation	1.8	1.8	1.6	2.0
Skewness	1.2	0.8	2.4	1.1
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 61

Number of Punctuation Errors in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	3.9	5.4	3.1	3.35
Median	3.7	5.1	3.1	3.3
Mode	3.0	5.0	1.0	3.0
Range	0 - 10	2 - 10	0 - 7	0 - 7
Standard Deviation	2.4	2.5	2.0	2.0
Skewness	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 62

Number of Misspelled Words in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	2.2	2.5	2.2	1.65
Median	1.2	1.75	1.0	0.9
Mode	0	1.0	0	1.0
Range	0 - 13	0 - 11	0 - 13	0 - 11
Standard Deviation	2.9	2.7	3.2	2.7
Skewness	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.8
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 63

Number of Homonym Errors in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.8	1.7	0.3	0.4
Median	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 7	0 - 7	0 - 3	0 - 5
Standard Deviation	1.6	2.2	0.7	1.2
Skewness	2.4	1.3	2.9	3.5
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Table 64

Number of Apostrophe Errors in Piece

	All Classifications	3110/3001	3110	3111/6111
Mean	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2
Median	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.1
Mode	0	0	0	0
Range	0 - 4	0 - 3	0 - 4	0 - 2
Standard Deviation	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.5
Skewness	3.1	1.9	4.0	2.7
Number of Cases	60	20	19	20

Figure 5

Typed Transcripts of Student Essays

Paper A (Task 1, 4/4 rating)

If you were to ask my friends about my questionable sense of humor, they'd probably say I have a good one. But if you were to ask some of my former teachers about it, they'd probably say "What sense of humor? Why that little . . ."

I really haven't done that many "smart-ass" pranks, but I allways get the blame. I guess theres no defense when you look guilty anyway.

Looking back, I suppose it all started when I was in the eighth grade.

One day we had a substitute for English, because our regular teacher had good ole jury duty. I kind'a felt sorry for the guy 'cause he looked out of place; I don't know why, but he looked like he was fresh out of college. But, as with all new things; they must be broken in. Like a new baseball glove, he was no exception.

I guess what really bugged me about this guy was his appearance. His hair was real short; it made his head look like a basketball with ears. He was also wearing some white platform shoes which had about five inches of sole. But what really got me, and everybody else; was his plaid high-water pants. I was quick to go for a one-liner. "Where's the flood Noah?", I asked in a loud voice. Boy, did he get pissed. (But he got over it.) Soon the whole class was getting into the act. There was a strange feeling in the room, it was like "Open season on substitute day." Class went on like this for a while, then he gave us a hefty assignment and everybody more or less shut-up.

Towards the end of the class, I started to get restless waiting for the bell to ring. I had finished my assignment so I decided to pass the time with a rubber-band and some foil wads.

In those days, a boy without a rubber-band was a sitting duck.

My first victim was a friend of mine who had shot me earlier in the day. Unfortunately, I hadn't been able to repay his kindness and affection; but now I could. He was sitting across the room, but I decided; long shot or not, no good deed goes unpunished.

I aimed very carefully; 'cause I didn't want to hit a nuetral bystander. Then I gently pulled back on the rubber-band, and let go. No; I didn't hit him, but my shot bounced off his desk and struck the wall with a loud slap.

When the thing hit, the substitute looked up and saw me trying to conceal the weapon. He then got up from the chair and walked over to where I was sitting. "Allright little boy, give it here!" he demanded. Reluctantly I handed it over to him. "And the foil" he added. So I gave him that too. Now, I felt totally defenseless.

He was mad, but I just didn't know how much. He started shaking his head at me and yelled "Shit!", "When are you little punks gonna grow up?" . . . Silence filled the room; with everyone in shock, especially me. "Answer me" he demanded. I was so stunned that he had cussed, I couldn't think of an answer. What a time to jump in headfirst with a one-liner "When we get older?" I asked.

Looking back now, maybe I shouldn't have said that; but at least it taught me something:
Don't major in education.

Paper B (Task 1, 4/4 rating)

Honesty

Honesty is a very important quality. A quality that people notice and admire you for. It has always been a goal of mine to be an honest person. Honesty is is a way of avoiding problems. An honest person will never get into trouble for stealing, lying, or being unfair.

More than once I have had the opportunity to cheat someone out of money. One afternoon, I was sent to the store for a gallon of milk. I paid the cashier for the milk with a five dollar bill. The cashier seemed to be in a hurry because of the long line at the checkout stand. The cashier thought I had given her a twenty dollar bill and gave me the wrong change. I walked out of the store thinking I had made an easy fifteen dollars. As I was getting into my car I was overwhelmed by guilt. I started to think that the cashier would be suspended or might even lose her job. She would be fifteen dollars short when her till was counted at the end of her shift. I went back in the store and told the cashier she had made a mistake when she gave me my change. She thanked me and said most people would have kept the extra money. As I was driving home I felt very good about the way I handled the situation.

The rewards of being honest will make you feel very good about yourself. An honest person is happy and always at peace with himself.

Paper C (Task 1, 3/3 rating)

As I think about it, the most characteristic aspect of my personality which I'm most proud of, is unquestionably my ability to understand. A person, who have little comprehension of the meaning of the term, might question my selection. True, that to be understanding cannot be justly put in any one of the common categorical traits. It can, however, be best compared to companionship and brotherly love.

The most vivid example in memory of my display of understanding was once in my sophomore year of high school. I was doing a sentence outline when Mrs Counsel, our English teacher, introduced a handicapped student to our class. Gary was sixteen years old, but he looked like eleven. Being bound to a wheelchair he found it difficult to adjust to his new environment. It wasn't long thereafter that he quickly withdrew from the class all-together. Gary would sit silently in his chair, in the lonely forgotton corner of our room. Ostracized by both the teacher and his peers, he became an almost "double-cripple." First deprecated physically by his handicap and secondly by his secluded attitude--Gary was straddled helplessly in his mental prison.

I remembered we were heading into our 4th week of School when I asked Ms Counsel if I could relocate to a desk next to Gary. Understandbly

suspicious, she interegated on my motives and I simply replied that Gary needs a friend to understand, care and listen to him. Ms Counsel continued to deliberate untill she grew tired of my constant molestion and finally bowed to my request.

The first week was unquestionably the most difficult. It was quite a task to reach through those stone walls Gary constructed around him. I understood that the walls was Gary's protection against further humilation and possible ridicule. What I needed to do is to gain his trust. The only way to accomplish that is to be extremely patient and understanding. The days rolled into weeks and then into months, my deleberence and patience was beginning to change Gary. He responded readily to my gestures and was becoming increasingly more active. Gary was no longer a double Handicap!

Gary moved away two months after we became best friends. In his last letter, Gary promised me that hes going to try out for his High School Basketball team. It stuns me to realize that countless doors of opportunity will open with a little understanding.

Peper D (Task 1, 3/3 rating)

I believe the trait that is most recognizable is my willingness to always do someone a favor. Sometimes it is hard for me to say no. Let me share an experience to back up my claim.

It was one very cold day back in high school. The snow began falling early morning. People expected for it to taper off and eventually cease by the end of school. However the snow continued to fall rapidly all day. As I was trampling through the snow after school trying to determine which pile of snow was my car; I was approached by several of my friends. They were all preparing for a long walk home. I offered them a ride eventhough I was bushed and ready to get home and relax. The four of us got in my car. We were ready to leave the school when I saw four more of my friends walking because their car would not start. Knowing I had no gas, and as usual no money I offered them a ride home also. The eight of us piled in my Volkswagen and went on our way. I ran out of gas just as I was pulling up on my street all because I could not stand to see my friends walking home in the freezing cold. I do not wish to be returned for the favor. I just want my friends to know they can count on me if they ever need anything, because I wont say "no" to them.

Paper E (Task 1, 2/2 rating)

The Quality In Me

The quality that makes me feel good about myself, is that I like to help other people when they are having some kind of problem. For instant I play all kinds of sports and I'm pretty good at it. If some body needed any help in any sport I wouldn't mind helping them. I feel that I'm qualified to help somebody, because I have experience in the field of any sport.

When I was a senior in high school. Their was this one girl who needed help in her free-throws, she asked me if I could help her. The only

reason why she ask me was because I was the best one on the team who had a good average score. This girl needed to learn how to shoot with an arch. So we use to practices at practices. I had to show her step by step on getting an arch when shooting free-throws. We used to meet after school and used to practices for 6 hours each day. I really enjoy taking time to show her how to become better skill in her free-throws.

Paper F (Task 1, 2/2 rating)

Caring

I know I am not the only one in the world that cares. But, I would like for this class to notice this one special trait I have, which is caring. What do I care about and what does it matter if I do care? Well, listen up to this essay and it will answer those questions.

I care about the feelings of people because, I have them too. It may not matter to anyone here but, to one who needs care it may matter. But, it is hard to care for everyone's feelings. I at least can say I care for people close to me who may have a sense of hurt feelings. Here is a incident which happened last year to a close friend who needed to have someone care enough to listen to her. My friend Anna had a problem with her family in letting her have some freedom with decisions in her life. Everyone felt her parents were too strict on her but, they never cared to listen to her fears. She was eventually pushed into peer pressure to drink and received a ulcer from the pressure. I finally convinced her to talk to me about her feelings cause I knew drinking would only make her problems worse. I cared enough to listen and give her some ideas towards making her life easier. Instead of pushing her, I pulled her closer.

I really don't know if that seems like a caring person to anyone else. But, I'll care enough to listen why. I just hope for everyone who is here, to realize I do try to understand and care. All I can say is I'm here if anyone needs me.

Paper G (Task 1, 1/1 rating)

My Friendly Way to Treat
Friends.

Even though, I don't like fights, I know of a weapon that gives amazing results. That is Amability. I consider myself as a person who is always glad to be help. For example, fixing other peoples car whenever I can. I am always looking forward to have more friends, and I am also always trying to conserve friendship. Furthermore, I concider sharing a very important factor in frienship; therefore, egoism is not my style. Also as a weak human being I make lots of mistakes; However, I admit them and I try to improve them. I think of racial descrimination as a very stupid thing; therefore, I try to be friendly with everyone around me.

Paper H (Task 1, 1/1 rating)

In my opinion my communication with people is the quality I do well. In high school were I would talk to a lot of people, I was still considered the shy type. Where I really began to communicate was in my summer job. It was a pleasure talking to senior citizens, I really learned a lot. But it wasn't until orientation were I notice I wasn't afraid to talk to people. I wasn't worryed about saying something dumb. I have also changed for the better at home. I have gotten closer to my family. They know more about the things I was afraid to tell them before.

Paper I (Task 2, 4/4 rating)

Final Copy "The Advantage of Vantage"

Advertising is a device used to reach human desires and needs. Often, advertisers determine the requisites of the public and can therefore undermine their thoughts. By appealing to the "macho" side of a man, a company can sell a deodorant that, supposedly, makes you feel like Robert Redford. Ridiculous as it may sound, advertisers can talk you into buying something you have no use for. Every single item that goes into an ad has been carefully selected to convince. Even two ads from the same company may appeal to different audiences and differ in other ways. For example, these two ads presenting the same brand of Vantage cigarettes may be aiming for different audiences and tastes.

The wording used in these ads has much to do with who it appeals to. The ad on art tends to draw attention to a public who wants success. The emphasis is on the hard work you put in and how it paid off. The ad about the sea, on the other hand, attracts the adventurer who seeks an inner, personal goal. One ad stresses a sucess in life while the other stresses a success of the mind.

Sex is widely used in advertising to appeal to male and female consumers. The woman on one ad attracts the male population by drawing pictures of romantic actions in their heads. The other ad draws attention to the handsome sea-lover. Maybe the woman was chosen for her happy but serious sense of accomplishment, while the man was chosen for his relaxed look of self-satisfaction.

Positioning of surrounding objects can, and usually do, contribute to the overall effect. The girl in an art room, holding paint brushes may signify a success in her art exhibition. The man holding a sword handle, with the refreshing sea and mountains in the background, may represent freedom to explore.

The art and sea ads are similarly aiming for the desire in everyone to reach a specific goal. The art ad tries to touch on and relate to the professional while the sea ad reaches for the need we have for a unique, pleasureable success.

In there own way, both ads appeal to a need within us. While one attracts one audience the other attracts the remaining half. By relating to our lives and our necessities, advertisers, with a skill, eventually get the best of us.

Paper J (Task 2, 4/4 rating)

You're standing in line at a check-out counter of a grocery store. Bored of waiting, you borrow a magazine from a nearby stand. Realizing that the line is moving faster than usual, you start to skim the magazine. Suddenly you start to flip back, page by page, looking for a certain ad. Ah, there she is, the goddess with the rich tan. What a great way to sell tanning lotion!

The first hurdle an advertiser must jump in making a successful ad is to develope an image or message which must jump out to the readers eyes and convince him to continue the rest of the ad.

In regard to the two cigarette ads, the advertiser uses an attractive lady in one ad and a handsome man in the other. In the titles to the messages of the ads, "Making your mark" and "A rich reward," they both attract an interest upon reading. You would probably ask yourself, What kind of mark?, or how good is her mark? Already the simple title may have caught your attention, thus, having you continue the rest of the message. The words 'rich and reward' are attractive because they project a sense of monetary value. The reader's imagination begins to inter-act with the message and the detail in the picture.

Most people have a tendency to associate themeselves with an ad because they have something in common. The "artist" ad seems to be directed to women who see themselves as talented or skillfull, intellegent and independent. A women who "thinks" before she acts. The message takes you back into your own history where you had once succeeded in your accomplishments. The posture of the lady in the picture, her smile, the used paint brushes, all project a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Here the artist seems to be taking a cigarette break from her work. She admires her work as she injoys her cigarette. She projects a simple artist with an impressive background. So audience, take it from somebody who's a thinker and into detail, smoke Vantage!

The "scuba diver" ad is probable directed mostly to men. The pictured diver is handsome & tough, a curious explorer, daring but cautious, and not easly pleased. Most men would most likley associate themselves with this character-type. The picture alone would catch an eye. The setting is fresh and relaxing, it invites adventure and shows satisfaction. The picture shows the equipment he uses to accomplish his task. He is knowledgeable of the levels of qualities in equipment and is aware of the dangers underwater, so he settles for nothing but the best. So again audiences, take it from an expert, don't settle for anything else but the best. Smoke Vantage!

Paper K (Task 2, 3/3 rating)

The ads are dealing with the same category. Success is a key word in both of the ads. An ad is used to make people buy the product. In an advertising article the people advertising the product want to make the article interesting. Interesting enough, in a sense so the buyers will become interested in the product. If they do, the buyers will go out and buy the product. This is what advertisers want; they want to sell the

product to the buyers through advertising. These two advertising articles are for the same brand, yet each one deals with success of some kind. They are different types of success. It depends on what the person in the article has succeeded in.

In the first article, the advertisers are trying to sel' their product to the younger generation who have succeeded in their goals. Their career was fulfilled with a lot of hard work and time. But they look as though it was worth it. The first article also is trying to appeal to the male people who view this article. A man should be attracted to the article because it's about a woman who is successful. It's about a woman who started out at the bottom and has worked or put her work and capability to work. She kept on working and has succeeded. So a male person sees this article he will read it and become aware of what is being advertised. In the second article the advertisers are trying to sell their product to the female buyers. The article is about a man who seems well off. He seems healthy and built. He is the type of man who is leisure yet aggresive and assurtive towards success. This article catches the eye of the female buyers. A man who has goals of success which are succeeded all by himself in special ways. Both articles are well written but each one deals with different buyers and different successes.

Paper L (Task 2, 3/3 rating)

Writing Assignment #2

"Vantage. The Taste of Success" is the slogan used in both advertisements. Both are trying to sell a brand of cigarettes called Vantage. In both of these advertisements it is stressed that Vantage is the cigarette that gives a sense of accomplishment or "Success." Although in both advertisements, the people that appear have accomplish a great task, the self-satisfaction of knowing one has done something worth while is enough reason to smoke Vantage. Even though both advertisements are for Vantage, the appeal of the product is different.

In the first advertisement a women is seen with paint brushes in one hand and a cigarette in the other. It looks as though she is looking in her past and looking at what she had to go through to get where she is today. She is dressed in an old painting jacket that has stains of paint on it. Her paint brushes look old and worn down. Her jacket and her brushes are to show that she has worked hard to get where she is today which gives her an expression of self-satisfaction. This is to appeal to the person who has put a fight and been through alot to get successful. This is for the person who has not had it easy, but who has done it anyway.

The second advertisement shows a scuba diver who has just found an old relic. To this man, his work is his sport which is shown by the mountains and the ocean. He can spend days doing what he likes to do best. Today is special to him because he found something, something he has been looking for for a long time. He is looking at it as though he cannot believe it. Because he found it, today is not just a good day, today is a great day. This scuba diver can represent any man or women who did a bit more than

expected at work or who scored a little bit higher in a sport. He symbolizes the initiative to accomplish a little bit more than usual.

These advertisements stress success because they want people to know that "Vantage" is success.

Paper M (Task 2, 2/2 rating)

compare/contrast

One comparison in these two ads is the accomplishment they have made, so they are being rewarded with "the taste of success." Also, the word usage in each ad shows similar thought, that you have finally reached your goal. The looks on their faces show hapiness in what they are doing, also a comparison. They show a quiet, and calm atmosphere in both pictures. Most important of all, they put the "little" ad in the bottom left hand corner to show that it is dangerous to your health!

On the other hand, I feel that the first ad is trying to sell the product to the more private, individualistic person while, the second ad is trying to sell to the more out-going person.

Paper N (Task 2, 2/2 rating)

"You're tasting success and it
sure tastes good."

The first ad shows a worker woman achieving what every person dreams about, such as success, talent. All the main facts that you need in order to see the product of your hard working though all the years and finally you

In the second ad a man appears with a smile of success. It seems to be more idialistic, dreaming with nature, admiring the sunken wrecks, looking for history, trying to reach success, looking for adventures.

Both ads reflects the key of success that always attract people's attention including the good taste, that in this case the taste of success is vantage

It seems to me that the second ad is more idialistic than the second ad. It says more about the feelings of the person.

The impression I got from this ads is that the advertisers are trying to sell their product to a hard working people that always try to look for articles that makes them feel good about themselves.

I think that the key words that are being used in each ad to persuade this audience are talent, changed your life, satisfaction, and the main phrase is "You're tasting success and it sure taste good. People always look for things and phrases that makes them feel good about themselves.

The advertiser looks for hints that attract the attention of the audience, by involving prell pretty women and of course good looking man to present their product.

They think that by buying the product their physical appearance or their intelectual being will become exactly as the one of the person who is presenting the product.

Paper P (Task 2, 1/1 rating)

The advertisers are trying to sell the product of cigarrettes to both men and women. They are also saying that its acceptable in society. The youths of today are doing it. The tobacco gets better as each year or generation passes by.

It is said that its a great way to make you relax and even helps you to concentrate better. Even though a lot of people smoke cigarrettes there is still the warning on its label saying that it is dangerous to your health. Like all things are good yet the results are not always to ones benefit.

Paper Q (Task 2, 1/1 rating)

Trying to compare a cigarette brand
with to different people, and too
different goals.

The first add shows a woman smoking a cigarette getting ready for her first art gallery show. and it looks like she is confident she is going to do well in her show. This add is for people who thought they couldn't do well but with a little work they could do well and be confident.

The second picture add tells of a man who sets his goals then goes after them. This picture add is for the people who know what they want and will go after it. and it seems he has found his goal.

CONCLUSION

In this report, we have articulated the theoretical framework and methodology of the fall 1983 University of Texas at El Paso Writing Assessment Project, and we have summarized the major normative aspects of entering students' writing revealed by the assessment. The description of student writing has included results of a socio-economic and attitude survey, as well as several standardized test scores; in addition, we have evaluated and reported on actual student writing samples in a variety of ways, including both statistical dimensions and analyses of representative essays. The report provides a wealth of information. Equally important, this information has been gathered within a consciously designed and carefully researched theoretical framework, and represents an empirical body of normative data concerning student writing at this university. Virtually for the first time, those charged with the development of the composition program at the University of Texas at El Paso have access to empirically based, systematically gathered data about the performance of student writers. These data make it possible to consider, to refute, or perhaps to support previously impressionistic and anecdotal accounts of student writing.

Several key findings have emerged from the descriptive statistics and analyses we have provided in this report. The data from the survey questionnaire have given us much information about students' background and previous educational experiences. We have learned, for example, that perhaps a majority of our students are part of the first generation in their families to attend college--a finding with numerous implications for teaching at this institution. We have found also that some students in

local area high schools are being exposed to at least some of the new methods of composition pedagogy that substitute actual writing for repetitive drill. Nevertheless, those students appear still to be a minority, and we would hope that a greater variety of pedagogical methods will be employed. We have learned, further, that there does not seem to be any dramatic improvement--indeed, there seems to be a slight decrease--in the exposure to contemporary pedagogy of students continuing in the UTEP composition program.

In examining the major features of how our students actually write, the following points have emerged as salient. First, there is an extremely wide range of student writing among our entering students, from the stylistically and rhetorically sophisticated to the nearly illiterate. Second, there is a wide variation in the awareness of contexts for writing such as audience, purpose of the writing task, sense of psychological closure, and rhetorical mode. Third, these content features appear more significant than incidence and types of surface-level errors: indeed, based on the data we have reported, it would be extremely difficult to justify significant decisions about the quality of student writing on the basis of types or numbers of errors alone. Finally, we note that students showed a sensitivity to appropriate choice of invention (or pre-writing) strategies on the different writing tasks; nevertheless, they tended to allot approximately the same amount of time to either task.

As potentially useful as these data may be, however, they do not in themselves provide answers to key issues concerning the composition program. The data tell us a great deal about how our students write when they enter our program. This statement in itself suggests the need for

future studies, to gather information about how students write when they leave the composition program, and even how they write at the end of their college career. The data in this report, and the files of scores and student papers from which they are derived, can potentially be used in a variety of other studies. To cite just one example, the current placement policy in the composition program should be re-examined, to see whether the TSWE, SAT-Verbal, and ACT scores now used to place students in the various courses are accurate predictors of writing performance. To do so will require correlations of standardized test scores and performance on writing samples; certain questions from the survey of student attitudes may also be correlated with other variables to see whether they have predictive value. This, and further studies involving correlations of variables, will be included in a future report.

Even as such studies are undertaken, other questions must be addressed. Student writing is a concern of the entire university faculty, as evidenced by the inclusion of a composition requirement in every undergraduate degree plan. It is thus a concern also of the university administration. We, the authors of this report, would accordingly hope for responses from many members of the faculty and administration to the results of this report and their implications.

We would like to know, for example, how faculty who are not regularly charged with teaching writing to freshmen perceive the quality of writing in the sample. From the holistic grading sessions, which included many faculty members from other departments, we have an impressionistic and anecdotal sense of the following consensus about the quality of writing: surprise at the wide variance of abilities, pleasure from a small number of

fluent and thoughtful papers, satisfaction that the general level of competence was perhaps higher than expected, and genuine and understandable dismay at a distressing number of nearly illiterate efforts.

Given this wide variance in the quality of writing by entering freshmen, the university community--not just the English Department or the composition program--needs to address such issues as desirable exit performance from the program and from college, and what resources can and should be expended to help ensure such performance. Several issues are interconnected here. Can student writing be improved by instruction in composition classes alone? How can writing in subject-matter classes be more supportive of the development of writing abilities? Should required writing instruction in the formal composition program be restricted to the freshman year? Are writing class sizes optimal--that is, would smaller class sizes or different instructional settings result in a higher rate of success for the program? Can faculty charged primarily with the teaching of writing upgrade their skills? Specifically, what encouragement can be given to faculty whose graduate training and research is primarily literary to learn current theory and pedagogy of composition teaching? Also, how can dependence on part-time faculty be reduced, and how can those part-time faculty we do employ be encouraged to improve their effectiveness? Are alternative instructional resources, such as writing laboratories, modular classes, and computer-assisted instruction, likely to be cost-effective given this institution, its problems, and its resources? Finally, how important is the development of writing abilities to the mission of this institution, and how much--in terms of funding--is the university willing to support that development?

This report provides no answers to any of these questions, nor has it sought to. These are issues of educational mission for the entire university, with specific curricular and program responsibility primarily in the composition faculty and (currently) the English Department. For these audiences, the authors of this report have sought to provide essential, empirical data that can be brought to bear on these qualitative decisions. We have attempted to describe, in as accurate and detailed a manner as possible, how our students write when they enter this university. This knowledge, we believe, will make possible realistic, informed decisions about what their abilities might become as they pursue their education here, about how those goals might be achieved, and about what resources will be needed to achieve them.

APPENDIX A

A.1 -- Survey Questionnaire

A.2 -- MEMO: Instructions from English Department Chair and Writing Assessment Committee

A.3 -- "Reminder and Instructions"

A.4 -- General Instructions from Chair--"UTEP Writing Program Assessment, Fall 1983."

A.5 -- Schedule, UTEP Writing Program Evaluation, Fall 1983

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Before answering this questionnaire:

1. Where you would fill in your name, please write your course call number. It will have five numbers. Ask your instructor for help if you do not know the numbers. Please write the date next to this number.

2. Fill in your student identification number (social security number) in the section labeled "IDENTIFICATION NUMBER." Be sure to fill in the blank to the right of each number.

3. If you have any difficulty responding to an item, please write why next to that item. Also, please write your student identification number on the first page of this questionnaire to signal our attention.

* *

1. Before this semester, where did you receive your most recent training in writing?
   1 UTEP
   2 High School
   3 El Paso Community College (EPCC)
   4 A four-year college other than UTEP
   5 A two-year college other than EPCC

2. What writing course are you enrolled in? (select one)
   1 3110 with 3001
   2 3110
   3 3111
   4 6111
   5 3112

3. Where did you receive most of your pre-college education? (If none of the categories below applies to you, leave number 3 on the answer sheet blank.)
   1 El Paso School System
   2 Ysleta School System
   3 A private school system in El Paso
   4 A school system within a 60 mile radius of El Paso (for example: Socorro, Gadsden, Clint, Canutillo)
   5 Mexico

4. What is your sex? (Please be sure you are filling in number 4 on the answer sheet.)
   1 Female
   2 Male

5. What is your age?
   1 17-20 years old
   2 21-25 years old
   3 26-30 years old
   4 31-35 years old
   5 36 years or older

6. Do you consider yourself bilingual in English and Spanish?
   1 Yes
   2 No

7. Which language is easier for you to speak?
   1 English
   2 Spanish
   3 Speak both with equal ease

8. Which language is easier for you to read?
   1 English
   2 Spanish
   3 Read both with equal ease

9. Which language is easier for you to write?
   1 English
   2 Spanish
   3 Write both with equal ease

10. Which is the highest educational level completed by either one of your parents? (Pick only one response.)
   1 Did not complete high school
   2 Completed high school (high school diploma)
   3 Completed 2 years of college (at either a 2 or 4 year institution)
   4 Completed undergraduate college (BA or BS/4 year degree)
   5 Completed graduate school (Masters degree, MA/doctorate, medical, law degree)

11. What is the longest piece of writing you have done?
   1 One page or under
   2 Two to five pages
   3 Six to ten pages
   4 Eleven to twenty pages
   5 Twenty pages or more

12. Please give your best estimate as to how much (on the average) you have written during the past four years. Include letters, journals, assignments, essays, notes, memos, any work-related writing, or, in other words, everything that includes writing sentences.
   1 About one page of writing every month
   2 More than one page a month, but no more than four pages a month--about one a week
   3 Between two and six pages a week
   4 Between seven and ten pages a week--at least a page (or more) every day
   5 More than two pages of writing every day

13. Have you ever typed or had a writing assignment typed?
    1 Yes
    2 No

14. Have you ever kept a daily writing journal or diary for six months or more?
    1 Yes
    2 No

15. Have you ever written a paper where it was necessary to document information with footnotes, bibliography, or references?
    1 Yes
    2 No

16. Have you ever done writing exercises where you combined sentences together?
    1 Regularly--two or more times a week for at least six months
    2 Sometimes--about once a week for at least a few months
    3 Rarely--about once a month for at least a few months
    4 Never

17. In your past writing instruction were you encouraged to write in a manner without concern for spelling and grammar, but to write whatever comes to your mind, whatever thoughts you might be having? This is sometimes referred to as free-writing.
    1 Regularly--two or more times a week for at least six months
    2 Sometimes--about once a week for at least a few months
    3 Rarely--about once a month for at least a few months
    4 Never

18. Have you ever conferenced with an instructor about your writing?
    1 Regularly--two or more times a week for at least six months
    2 Sometimes--about once a week for at least a few months
    3 Rarely--about once a month for at least a few months
    4 Never

19. Do you ever share your writing with classmates, family, or friends?
    1 Always
    2 Usually
    3 Sometimes
    4 Rarely
    5 Never

20. When writing, do you ever revise a draft by eliminating or adding paragraphs or sections?
    1 Always
    2 Usually
    3 Sometimes
    4 Rarely
    5 Never

21. When writing, do you ever revise a draft by changing sentences, spelling, punctuation, or grammar?
    1 Always
    2 Usually
    3 Sometimes
    4 Rarely
    5 Never

22. Before you write, do you engage in any activity to get you thinking about your subject such as quiet time to think, talking to others, jotting notes, making outlines, etc.?
    1 Always
    2 Usually
    3 Sometimes
    4 Rarely
    5 Never

23. Given a choice, which type of writing listed below would you prefer doing?
    1 Writing based on personal experience (autobiographical)
    2 Writing in which you explain something
    3 Writing in which you persuade others
    4 Fiction, or poetry, or drama
    5 Makes no difference (If you select this response, skip the next item.)

24. For your second choice, which type of writing would you select?
    1 Writing based on personal experience (autobiographical)
    2 Writing in which you explain something
    3 Writing in which you persuade others
    4 Fiction, or poetry, or drama
    5 Makes no difference

25. Do you believe writing well is important in order to do well in your coursework here at UTEP?
    1 Yes
    2 No
    3 Do not know

26. Do you believe writing well is important in order to do well in your career?
    1 Yes
    2 No
    3 Do not know

27. Do you enjoy writing?
    1 Always
    2 Usually
    3 Sometimes
    4 Rarely
    5 Never

28. How would you evaluate the quality of your writing instruction over the last few years?
    1 Excellent
    2 Good
    3 Fair
    4 Poor
    5 Non-existent

29. Compared with other students entering UTEP, what is your best estimate of your writing ability?
    1 Excellent
    2 Good
    3 Fair
    4 Poor
    5 Do not know

30. Do you feel it is within your control to improve your writing ability?
    1 Very much
    2 Somewhat
    3 Very little
    4 Not at all
    5 Do not know

31. In the last 2 years, have you put much effort into improving your writing ability?
    1 Very much
    2 Somewhat
    3 Very little
    4 Not at all

Thank you for your time. Your participation in this study is appreciated.

9/1/83

TO: All instructors teaching 3110, 3111, and 6111

FROM: Larry Johnson and the Writing Assessment Committee

RE: Administering the Writing Assessment Background Survey

The instructors participating in the full two week writing assessment have been contacted; however, all instructors teaching 3110, 3111, or 6111, will need to pick up materials (questionnaires, IBM forms, #2 pencils) to administer the background survey for our department's writing assessment. In order to insure valid results, the survey must be administered uniformly. The dates for administering the survey are:

MWF Classes	Wed. Sept. 14
TTh Classes	Thurs. Sept. 15

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes of class time. A reminder, with further information, will be forthcoming closer to that time. If you have any questions, contact John Dick, David McQueen, or Barbara Gordon. Your cooperation in this is greatly appreciated.

ALL 3001, 3110, 3111, 6111 Instructors

Reminder and Instructions

This Wednesday, Sept. 14, and this Thursday, Sept. 15, ALL 3001, 3110, 3111, and 6111 classes will participate in a survey questionnaire for our department's Writing Assessment. This will take approximately 20 minutes of class time. Please follow these instructions:

1. Right before your 3001, 3110, 3111, 6111 class, pick up the following materials in the Faculty Resource Room, #115, right next door to the English Department Office:
   A. Survey Questionnaires
   B. IBM Sheets
   C. #2 Pencils

2. Be ready to give the students the course call number. This is a five digit number you will find on roll lists or in registration materials.

3. Please tell the students to ask you for help if they do not understand something on the questionnaire. Students may be confused about items #7-9. If they have answered no to item 6, they can skip items 7-9, or code English.

4. Checking IBM Sheets: Please check the following when students turn in their IBM sheets:
   A. The social security number is filled in along with the blanks to the right of the numbers.
   B. The course call number and the date are written at the top of the IBM sheet.

5. Checking the Questionnaires: If a student has written on the questionnaire sheets to explain why an item was confusing, please be certain that student has written his or her social security number on that questionnaire and put such a questionnaire on the top when you turn them in.

6. If student(s) are absent, save the appropriate number of questionnaires, IBM sheets and pencils and have those student(s) complete the questionnaire next class. These can be turned in to Laura at a later date. It is important that all in-coming students are reached.

7. As soon as your class has completed the questionnaires, please return all materials to the Faculty Resource Room. There are not enough materials for all classes so it is necessary to rotate the pencils and questionnaires.

Thank you for your time!

Your cooperation is appreciated!

UTEP WRITING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, FALL 1983

Your class has been selected for an assessment of the writing program at UTEP. In this assessment, the English Department will be gathering a large amount of information about the writing abilities of incoming students. In addition, information about other factors that may have a relationship to writing will be gathered.

This information will be used to improve placement and instruction in the writing program. For example, the English Department needs to know whether the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) scores are really useful in placing students in the correct course. Also, finding out the actual strengths and weaknesses that UTEP students have may help us design a better placement test. Further, this information will help us design more effective ways of instruction, and concentrate our efforts in areas where students need the most help.

Thus, your participation in the assessment has important implications for future directions that the composition program will take at UTEP. It is possible that some changes in writing instruction might be made while you are still taking freshman courses. Certainly students and teachers in later years will benefit greatly from your conscientious participation in this study.

During the next two weeks, your class will spend from one to four class meetings in this assessment. Some questionnaires will be given in class; other measures may be completed at home and turned in on a specified day. During these weeks, your attendance and prompt arrival at class will be very important. Make a special effort to come to class, and to arrive on time each day! If you are absent from class any day during this assessment period, you will need to complete the task you missed at one of two designated times the following week. During the assessment period, follow all instructions you are given carefully. If your class has a take-home assignment, be sure to complete it and bring it to class on schedule.

So that information can be organized for the purposes of the study, you will be asked to place your student identification number on assessment materials. However, your name will not be used during the study and will not appear in any report of the results. Also, your teacher will check assessment materials for compliance with certain instructions (including your student identification number, for example); but he or she will not use the materials in any way that will affect your grade or your instruction in this class.

An important part of program evaluation is finding out how well skills have been learned. Accordingly, some of you will be contacted later in your college career for participation in a similar study. For example, another assessment may be made while you are taking English 3112; or you may take part in a study during your senior year.

As reports on this assessment are completed, English Department faculty will be notified. If any of you are interested at that time in learning the results, arrangements for appointments with faculty conducting the study will be made.

Thank you for your cooperation in this assessment. With your help, the study will have far-reaching implications for the UTEP composition program.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Johnson, Ph.D.
Chairman, Department of English

SCHEDULE, UTEP WRITING PROGRAM EVALUATION, FALL 1983

MWF classes

Wednesday, August 31	--	Briefing of students
Friday, September 2	--	End-of-class briefing of new students
Wednesday, September 7	--	Give directions for Prompt 1; students start in class
Friday, September 9	--	Collect Prompt 1; give out Prompt 2; students start in class
Monday, September 12	--	Administer Nelson-Denny Reading Test
Wednesday, September 14	--	Collect Prompt 2; administer Survey Questionnaire

TTH and night classes

Thursday, September 1	--	Briefing of students
Tuesday, September 6	--	Give directions for Prompt 1; students start in class
Thursday, September 8	--	Collect Prompt 1; give out Prompt 2; students start in class
Tuesday, September 13	--	Collect Prompt 2; administer Nelson-Denny Reading Test
Thursday, September 15	--	Administer Survey Questionnaire

APPENDIX B

B.1.a. Writing Task #1 (with Directions)

B.1.b. Writing Task #2 (with Directions)

B.2. "Instructor's Guidelines, Briefing for Students"

B.3. Instructor's Guidelines, Writing Task #1

B.4. Instructor's Guidelines, Writing Task #2

UTEP WRITING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, FALL 1983 WRITING EXERCISE # 1

On the enclosed pages, you will find directions for a writing task. After your instructor has answered any questions you may have about the task, you may begin work during the remainder of the class period.

Please follow these directions:

1. Complete the writing task by the next class meeting, and remember to bring it to the next class.

2. Write your essay in black ink, LEGIBLY. Blue inks sometimes do not copy well. Do not type.

3. Do your best writing.

4. Do not write your name on any of the papers. Instead, write your Student ID number at the top of each page you turn in. Also, write your class and course code number, which your instructor will give you, at the top of each page.

5. If you jot down any notes or write preliminary drafts, turn them in also, labeled "notes" or "draft." Put them behind the final copy of your essay.

6. Keep track of the time you spend on this project, including the time in this class. Fill in the blanks below when you turn in the materials.

   I spent approximately _____ hours, and

   _____ minutes on this writing task.

7. Turn in these materials with your essay and any other writing you did connected with it. Your teacher will have paper clips for you to use.

8. Complete this information:

   Student ID number _____

   Course call number _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

Each of us has a quality that makes us feel good about ourselves. It may be that we are honest, or that we have a good sense of humor. Whatever it is, we hope that others will recognize this trait and like us for it. Think of your many qualities, and pick one that you would most like to be appreciated for.

Pretend that you are in a small class where no one knows each other. You have been asked to introduce yourself by writing an essay which will be read to the others. In this essay, state the quality you would most like your classmates to recognize in you and tell an experience from your life that shows your being that way. Tell the experience in such a way that your classmates can clearly see the trait you have.

UTEP WRITING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, FALL 1983 WRITING EXERCISE # 2

On the enclosed pages, you will find directions for a writing task. After your instructor has answered any questions you may have about the task, you may begin work during the remainder of the class period.

Please follow these directions:

1. Complete the writing task by Wednesday, September 14, and remember to bring it to class that day.

2. Write your essay in black ink, LEGIBLY. Blue inks sometimes do not copy well. Do not type.

3. Do your best writing.

4. Do not write your name on any of the papers. Instead, write your Student ID number at the top of each page you turn in. Also, write your class and course code number, which your instructor will give you, at the top of each page.

5. If you jot down any notes or write preliminary drafts, turn them in also, labeled "notes" or "draft." Put them behind the final copy of your essay.

6. Keep track of the time you spend on this project, including the time in this class. Fill in the blanks below when you turn in the materials.

   I spent approximately _____ hours, and

   _____ minutes on this writing task.

7. Turn in these materials with your essay and any other writing you did connected with it. Your teacher will have paper clips for you to use.

8. Complete this information:

   Student ID number _____

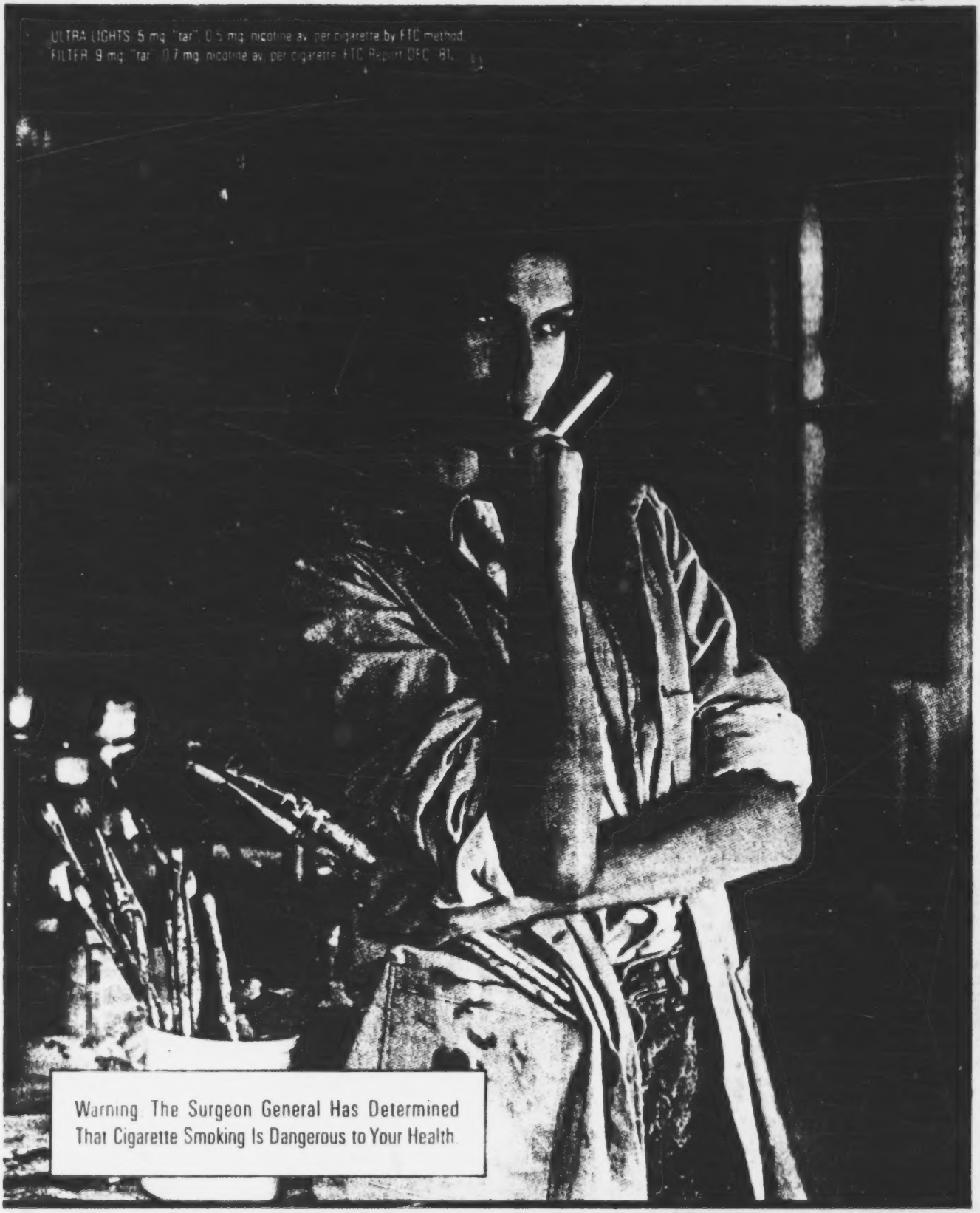
   Course call number _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

It is said that advertisers have a reason for everything they put in an ad. The background, the position of every object, and the type of person appearing in the ad are carefully planned. The words used to advertise the product are also selected for specific purposes.

Attached are two ads. They are for the same cigarette brand, yet each ad is somewhat different. Compare and contrast the two ads. Who are the advertisers trying to sell their product to? What appeals are being used in each ad to persuade this audience? What specific details in each ad accomplish these appeals?

Write an essay in which you report your analysis of the two ads.


ULTRA LIGHTS: 5 mg. "tar", 0.5 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
FILTER: 9 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette. FTC Report DEC. '81.
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Making your mark.

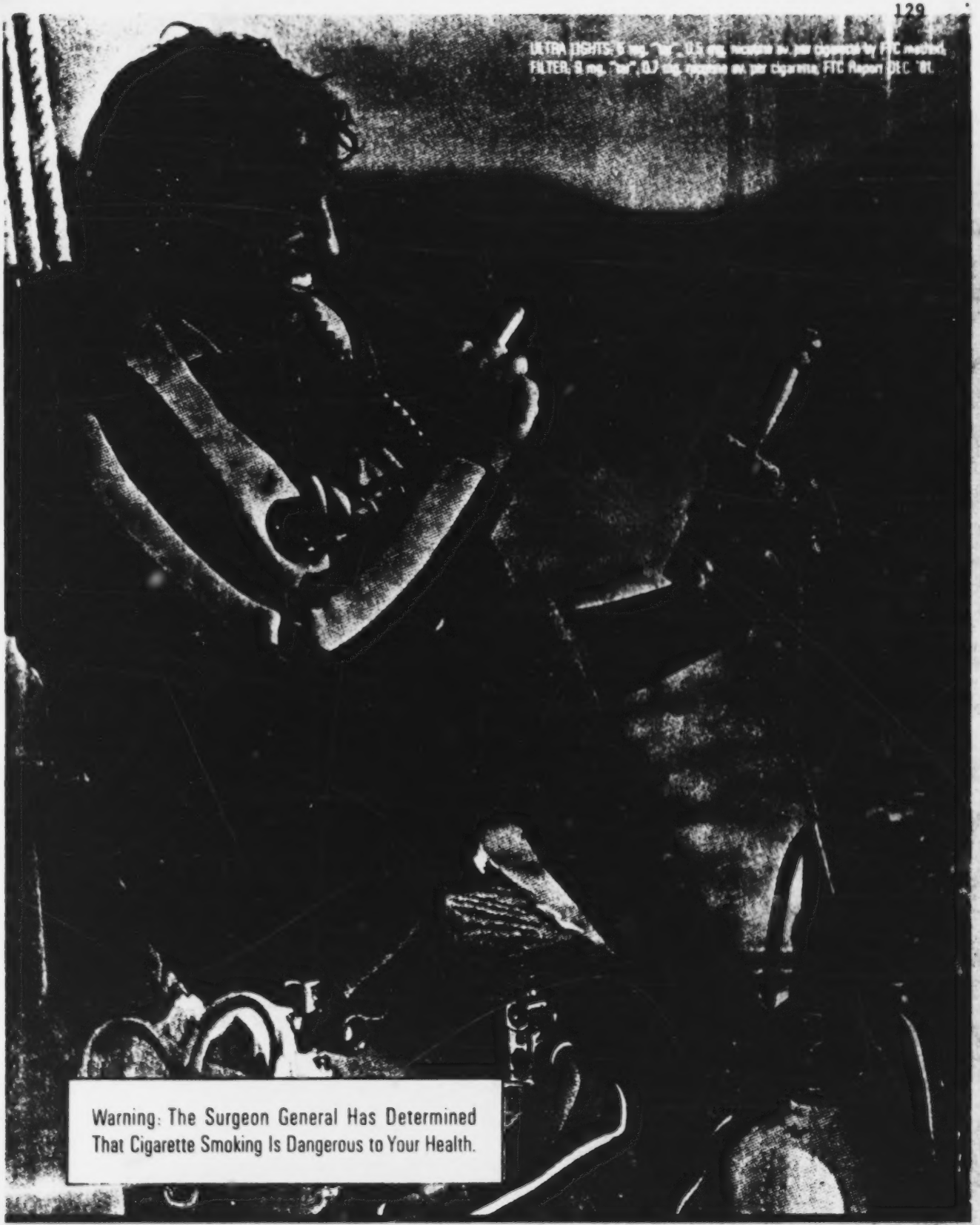
Remember when you couldn't draw a straight line? Then a great high school art teacher changed your life. You showed the talent. You put in the work. And now you're getting ready for your first gallery show.

You're tasting success and it sure tastes good.

VANTAGE.
THE TASTE OF SUCCESS.

Great Taste with Low Tar. That's Success!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE


ULTRA LIGHTS: 6 mg. "tar", 0.5 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
FILTER: 8 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report DEC. '81.
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A rich reward.

You live in the best of all possible worlds. A world that satisfies your love for the past—and your love for the sea. You spend your days looking for sunken wrecks. Not just for treasure. But to find out how people once lived. And today...70 feet down...you discovered the past and brought it up to the present.

You're tasting success and it sure tastes good.

VANTAGE.
THE TASTE OF SUCCESS.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDELINES, BRIEFING FOR STUDENTS

At the second class meeting this semester, please distribute the following letter from Dr. Johnson at the beginning of the class. In order to insure validity of the results of the assessment, please follow these steps:

1. Distribute the letters to the students.

2. Read the letter aloud to the students.

3. Ask students if they have any questions about the assessment, and discuss it with them as long as there seem to be further questions. Please observe these guidelines:

   a. You may discuss the nature of the instruments used in the assessment--a survey questionnaire (some classes will complete only this instrument), two writing samples, a reading comprehension test. However, do not give any information about specific questions or names of tests.

   b. Tell students that the assessment will have no effect on their grades and that you will not use their answers in any way that will affect instruction--e.g., the instruments will not be used for diagnostic purposes, nor will students later write on the same topics.

   c. Tell students that their student identification number will be requested on all instruments so that data files can be maintained, but that their names will not be used or reported during the study.

   d. Impress upon the students the importance of the data that will be gathered, and therefore, of the need for them to do their best writing. If students ask, elaborate about possible uses of the assessment: development of objective diagnostic/placement instruments, development of lab courses, cost/effectiveness of instruction in areas where students actually have difficulties.

   e. In the unlikely event that a student asks, "Why should I bother to participate when it won't affect my grade," and the arguments under 3d do not seem to be effective, suggest that the student make an appointment with Dr. Johnson to discuss these questions.

4. Tell your students to bring at least two black ink pens to each of the next four (TR) or five (MWF) class meetings. Stress that black ink is needed because some blue inks do not copy well, and that some writing they do may be xeroxed for purposes of analysis.

5. Use the remainder of the class period as you see fit. However, please avoid any suggestions about writing that might affect the validity of the results of the assessment. Specifically, please do not cover topics such as prewriting, outlining, drafting, or revision. We are interested in what our students do about these matters in as unprompted a writing situation as possible.

6. If you have a MWF class, brief any students who missed the second class meeting at the third meeting (Friday). You might dismiss the rest of the class about five minutes early for this purpose.

7. Please do not give students any other reading or writing assignments from September 6-15 (for TR classes) or September 7-14 (for MWF classes). To do so would introduce an uncontrollable variable into the collection of data.

8. The survey questionnaire will probably not take the entire class period on the final day of testing. Instructors should be prepared to give an assignment and/or an in-class instructional activity on September 14 and 15.

   Experience from the summer pilot of the assessment suggests that instructors may want to "de-brief" students after the questionnaire is completed. Students in the summer found the prompts, especially the second one, challenging and difficult; they expressed some frustration and wondered "Are we supposed to know how to do this?" They should be reassured that the prompts were deliberately designed to approximate tasks required in much college-level writing, and that therefore both difficulty and novelty are normal reactions. A class discussion of the assessment may help re-establish a climate of learning after the interruption of testing.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN THE ASSESSMENT.

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDELINES, WRITING PROMPT # 1

(Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes)

On Wednesday, September 7, begin class by handing out the materials for Prompt 1. Please follow these steps:

1. Read over the directions, out loud, with the students. Stress the need for following the directions, and give the course call number (a five digit number you will find on roll lists or in registration materials) on the board.

2. Answer any questions students may have about the meaning of the directions straightforwardly. Do not give any additional directions. For example, if students ask "Do we have to write drafts?" or "Do you want an outline?" or the like, simply say, "Do what you do when you are writing your best."

3. Similarly, answer any questions about the meaning of the prompt straightforwardly. Do not, however, give any suggestions or conduct any prewriting or similar class activities during the period.

4. At the end of the class period, remind students that the completed essay is due at the beginning of class Friday; that the essay should be written in black ink; that their ID number and the course call number should be at the top of each page. Remind them, too, to keep track of the time they spend, and close with the reminder "Do your best writing."

On Friday, September 9, collect the essays, first reminding students to put the papers in the following order: the prompt materials; the essay; notes and drafts. Have them check to be sure they have filled in the time spent, and that their ID number and course call number appear on each sheet. Hand out sufficient paper clips, collect the papers, and go on to Prompt 2.

Before you hand in the collected essays to Laura, check to be sure ID numbers and course call numbers are on the papers. If any student turns in an essay late, please note when the essay was turned in at the bottom of the first page of the prompt directions. Report also any student who fails altogether to turn in the essay.

Place the completed essays and prompt materials in this envelope and return it to Laura no later than September 16.

ID NUMBERS FOR STUDENTS WHO DID NOT TURN IN THE ESSAY:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDELINES, WRITING PROMPT # 2

(Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes)

On Friday, September 9, collect Prompt 1. Then hand out the prompt materials for the second writing task. Please follow these steps:

1. Read over the directions, out loud, with the students. Stress the need for following the directions, and give the course call number (a five digit number you will find on roll lists or in registration materials) on the board.

2. Answer any questions students may have about the meaning of the directions straightforwardly. Do not give any additional directions. For example, if students ask "Do we have to write drafts?" or "Do you want an outline?" or the like, simply say, "Do what you do when you are writing your best."

3. Similarly, answer any questions about the meaning of the prompt straightforwardly. Do not, however, give any suggestions or conduct any prewriting or similar class activities during the period.

4. At the end of the class period, remind students that the completed essay is due at the beginning of class Wednesday; that the essay should be written in black ink; that their ID number and the course call number should be at the top of each page. Remind them, too, to keep track of the time they spend, and close with the reminder "Do your best writing."

On Wednesday, September 14, collect the essays, first reminding students to put the papers in the following order: the prompt materials; the essay; notes and drafts. Have them check to be sure they have filled in the time spent, and that their ID number and course call number appear on each sheet. Hand out sufficient paper clips, collect the papers, and go on to administer the Survey Questionnaire.

Before you hand in the collected essays to Laura, check to be sure ID numbers and course call numbers are on the papers. If any student turns in an essay late, please note when the essay was turned in at the bottom of the first page of the prompt directions. Report also any student who fails altogether to turn in the essay.

Place the completed essays and prompt materials in this envelope and return it to Laura no later than September 21.

ID NUMBERS FOR STUDENTS WHO DID NOT TURN IN THE ESSAY:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

APPENDIX C

C.1. Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form E

C.2. Administration of Nelson-Denny Test, Form E, Directions

The following materials ("About the Authors" and "Purpose and History of the Test") are from the Examiner's Manual, The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Forms E and F Copyright © 1981, and is reproduced with the permission of the Riverside Publishing Company, 8420 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago, IL 60631.

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About the Authors

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test

JAMES I. BROWN, PH. D.

The senior author of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, Forms E and F, is Dr. James I. Brown, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Campus (Minneapolis/St. Paul). His academic credentials include a B.A. in English from Tarkio College, an M.A. in English from the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Colorado. Professor Brown has long been recognized as a principal figure in both test development and college reading circles. He is the author of previous forms of the *Nelson-Denny*.

J. MICHAEL BENNETT, ED. D.

Dr. J. Michael Bennett is coauthor of Forms E and F of the *Nelson-Denny*. Professor Bennett is Coordinator of the Efficient Reading Program at the University of Minnesota and is Assistant Professor of Rhetoric at the Twin Cities Campus. He completed a B.A.E. and an M.A.E. in English Education at the University of Florida and obtained a doctorate in Reading Education at the University of Georgia. Dr. Bennett's training and experience are at the secondary school and college levels of instruction.

GERALD S. HANNA, ED. D.

The second coauthor for Forms E and F of the *Nelson-Denny* test is Dr. Gerald S. Hanna, Professor of Education at Kansas State University. Dr. Hanna earned a B.A. and M.A. at California State University at Long Beach, and an Ed.D. in Educational Psychology and Measurement at the University of Southern California. Dr. Hanna is a notable scholar in the tests and measurement field.

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Part 1

Purpose and History of the Test

The ability to read well is so important in our culture that it is often the principal cause of success or of failure from the first grade of elementary school through college and into professional life. Skillful reading must be mastered and, consequently, measured carefully and fairly.

The primary purpose of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, Forms E and F, is to provide a trustworthy ranking of student ability in three areas of academic achievement: reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and reading rate. These are the three most important skills involved in the reading process and are related and interdependent.

From 1929 to 1959, the original forms of the test (Forms A and B) developed by M.S. Nelson and E.C. Denny of Iowa State Teacher's College, served students and teachers as a measure of reading ability and as a guide for instruction. In 1960 Forms A and B were revised by J.I. Brown of the University of Minnesota. The original format was retained, except for the addition of a measure of reading rate. The test still could be completed in its entirety in one class period. Professor Brown completed Forms C and D in 1973.

The current forms of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, Forms E and F, are the latest in a series of revisions of the test that was first administered more than 50 years ago. Content of the test and the quality of statistical data have been drastically altered since the first test in 1929 but the format remains basically unchanged due to its widespread acceptance.

General Description

The *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* is composed of two subtests, Vocabulary and Comprehension. The Vocabulary section consists of 100 items, each with five answer choices, and has a time limit of 15 minutes. (Previous test forms allowed 10 minutes.) The Comprehension section contains eight reading passages and a total of 36 questions, each with five answer choices. The time limit for this section is 20 minutes, the first minute being used to determine reading rate. Total administration time for the entire test, including answer sheet preparation, is no longer than 45 minutes.

Forms E and F have been statistically equated and can be used interchangeably as a pretest and posttest. Such use provides a measure of student growth and is of value to teachers in determining effectiveness of instruction. Forms E and F have also been equated to Forms C and D, permitting high schools and colleges to use new Forms E and F without rendering meaningless existing data from Forms C and D.

Part 2

Pre-Administration Considerations

Although a great deal of scholarship and technical sophistication were involved in the preparation of the *Nelson-Denny* testing materials, the accuracy and value of the data obtained can be seriously compromised if the test is not administered according to directions. It is important that you follow the administration procedures outlined in this section and in Part 3. After reading both parts of this manual, look at the sample items in the test so that you can administer the test properly.

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

Several factors should be considered prior to administration of the test:

1) Room Conditions. The testing room should be as free as possible from outside disturbance. A "We Are Testing" sign should be placed on the door, and arrangements should be made to minimize unnecessary noises and interruptions. The room should provide adequate work space for each student and should be well-lighted. It should also be large enough to permit effective monitoring. Spacing students will simplify the monitoring process, but should not be used as a substitute for supervision.

If the test is administered to large groups, there should be one proctor for every 25-30 students. One person should be in charge of the room and responsible for the care of materials. Proctors should be assigned to definite locations in the examination room and should be responsible for distributing and collecting materials and supervising activities in that section.

2) Necessary Materials. To take the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, students will need pencils and erasers in addition to test booklets and answer sheets. Each student should have two number 2 pencils. Hard-lead pencils, pens, and colored pencils cannot be used if answer sheets are to be machine scored. You should have an extra supply of pencils so that the class will not be disturbed by pencil sharpening.

3) Timing. Two timing devices should be used, a wall clock and a stopwatch or a watch with a sweep-second hand. Make a written note of the time when the test begins. The one-minute reading rate should be carefully timed to the second.

4) Time Limits. The complete test requires 35 minutes of testing time, 15 minutes for the Vocabulary Test and 20 minutes for the Comprehension and Reading Rate Test. Both portions of the test should be administered within a single class period. Additional time

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ADMINISTRATION OF NELSON-DENNY READING TEST, FORM E

Please read over pages 2-6 of the Examiner's Manual before administering the test. Amend the directions for Self-Scorable Answer Sheets so that students put only their student identification number under "Name" and the course code number under "Instructor." Please check to see that students have complied with these instructions before turning the completed answer sheets in to Laura. Allow 15 minutes for the Vocabulary Section and 20 minutes for the Comprehension Section of the test.

There are only enough test booklets for the Nelson-Denny Form E for four classes at any one hour. As a result, the booklets will have to be passed along so that all classes in the assessment can be evaluated. Please observe the following routing:

Monday, Sept. 12

Freeman -- after 8 o'clock class, arrange for Gingerich to receive booklets for 10 a.m. class in Psych. 202.

Pownell -- after 9 o'clock class, arrange for Mortensen to receive booklets for 11 a.m. class in LA 303.

Gingerich -- after 10 o'clock class, arrange for Trejo to receive booklets for 11 a.m. class in HUD 100.

Trejo -- after 11 o'clock class, arrange for Walker to get booklets for TR 8 a.m. class.

Sullivan -- after 12 noon class, arrange for Ehmann to get booklets for 8 a.m. TR class.

Scheiber -- after 12 noon class, arrange for Antone to get booklets for 8 a.m. TR class.

Mortensen -- after 12 noon class, arrange for Walker to get booklets for 8 a.m. TR class.

Tuesday, Sept. 13

Walker -- after 8 a.m. class, retain one set of booklets for 9:30 and 11 a.m. classes. Arrange for Trejo to get other set for 11 a.m. class in Miners 301.

After administering tests to your final class, please turn booklets and answer sheets in to Laura.

If there is any difficulty in making the exchanges of booklets personally, please arrange for a faculty member--if possible, John Dick, Barbara Gordon, or David McQueen--to handle the exchange.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

APPENDIX D

"UTEP Writing Assessment: Quantifiable Features" Checklist

UTEP Writing Assessment: Quantifiable Features

Evaluator _____

Student's Social Security No. _____

Task 1 (Personal Attribute) or Task 2 (Advertisement) _____

Total number of words in piece _____

Total number of sentences in piece _____

Total number of T-units in piece _____

(Enter one) Single paragraph (1) _____ Multi-paragraph (2) _____

	Total number each error
Sentence Problems --	
Fragments	_____
Run-ons and comma splices	_____
Garbled Syntax	_____
Inflection problems --	
Incorrect noun plurals	_____
Incorrect tense markers (e.g., no -ed for regular past tense verbs, incorrect irregular verb form)	_____
Hypercorrections (e.g., -ed after did or other modal, or inflected infinitive form)	_____
Subject-verb agreement	_____
Pronoun problems --	
Wrong case	_____
Faulty number agreement	_____
Faulty reference	_____
Mechanics --	
Punctuation error (other than comma splice)	_____
Misspelled words	_____
Homonym problems	_____
Apostrophe misused or missing when needed	_____

APPENDIX E

E.1. Memo to Faculty in English Department

E.2. Memo to Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants in Other University Colleges and Departments

To: Faculty and graduate teaching assistants in the Department of English
From: John Dick, Barbara Gordon, David McQueen, and Howard Scheiber
Subject: Rating of Writing Assessment Papers

In the recent Writing Assessment, approximately 1325 samples of student writing were collected. Now, these papers must be evaluated--and we need your help!

The papers will be rated using holistic scoring techniques--a method which permits readers to rank more than thirty essays per hour. In four different scoring sessions, two types of holistic scoring will be used: general impression scoring, in which papers are rated against each other according to overall quality, and primary trait scoring, in which papers are rated according to how well they fulfill specific rhetorical demands of the writing assignment.

Those volunteering to assist in the rating of the essays will devote six hours to the project--three hours to a training session (required) and three hours in one session of evaluating papers. Sessions will begin about November 1, and will be staggered throughout the month of November.

As incentives for your participation, we would point out that service to the department and university is reportable on your vita update or resume. In addition, many instructors have found that holistic scoring techniques can be adapted to grading classroom assignments--including both short papers and essay exams--with much greater efficiency than line-by-line correcting. We believe training in these techniques qualifies as faculty development and can also be reported on vitas and resumes.

If you are interested in taking part in the ranking of the Writing Assessment essays, please complete the following questionnaire and return it to John Dick, Department of English, by October 21st.

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Please put a "1" beside your first choice of day and time for training and rating sessions. Put a "2" by your second choice. Put an "X" beside any day/time you cannot participate.

Tuesdays	9 a.m. - 12 noon	1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Thursdays	9 a.m. - 12 noon	1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturdays	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	

Are there any dates you would prefer for training or rating sessions?

Are there any dates you would be unable to attend either type of session?

TO: Faculty and graduate teaching assistants in the College of Education, and the Departments of Drama and Speech, English, History, Mass Communication, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology and Anthropology.
FROM: John Dick, Barbara Gordon, and Howard Scheiber (English Department)
SUBJECT: Rating of Writing Assessment Papers

Once again we are asking your help in rating writing samples collected during last fall's Writing Assessment. Approximately 650 papers written in response to the second writing task, a comparison of two advertisements, remain to be evaluated, using both general impression and primary trait scoring.

Those who participated last fall have reported that the training and experience have increased their efficiency in reading papers in their own classes, and have suggested ways of sharpening and honing essay assignments in a variety of fields. In addition, as service to the university and a faculty development activity, participation in the evaluation sessions can be reported on vitas and resumes.

Based on our experience last fall, we are lengthening the time of evaluation sessions. We recognize that few participants will be able to stay for the entire session, and we will be grateful for whatever time you can spare. However, if you volunteer, your participation in the first hour and a half of the session--the "calibration" period--is essential.

Those who attended last semester's training sessions will not need further briefing. However, if you were unable to attend earlier training sessions, we do ask that you take part in an upcoming training workshop, to be held under the auspices of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Tuesday, January 31, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Please contact Dr. Howard Scheiber (Department of English) or Dr. Terri Salinger (Curriculum and Instruction) for further details.

If you can participate in the ranking of Writing Assessment essays, please complete the following questionnaire and return it to John Dick, Department of English, by February 1.

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Department: _____

Please put a "1" beside your first choice of day and time for rating sessions. Put a "2" by your second choice. Put an "X" beside any day/time you cannot participate. Please note: attendance at the entire session is not required, but attendance at the first hour and a half--for calibration--is essential.

Tuesdays	9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (with lunch break)	Wednesdays	1:30-6:30 p.m. (with coffee break)
Thursdays	1:30 - 6:30 p.m. (with coffee break)	Saturdays	9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (with lunch break)

Are there any dates you would prefer for rating sessions?

Are there any dates you would be unable to attend a session?

APPENDIX F

F.1. Primary Trait (PT) Scoring Guide: Writing Exercise #1

F.2. Primary Trait (PT) Scoring Guide: Writing Exercise #2

PRIMARY TRAIT SCORING GUIDE: WRITING EXERCISE #1

Primary Trait: Personal narrative to illustrate character trait.

Scoring Guide Categories:

4 = Structured and complete narrative to support the trait.

*relates a complete narrative
*ample and appropriate details
*fully and consistently resolved
*tight control in the management of narrative
*provides substance for the identified personality trait

3 = Clear evidence of narrative to support the trait.

*elaborated narrative, but lacking clear structure or focus
*may be flawed in one of these ways:
--one or another part of narrative inconsistently developed
--situation established and developed, but ends without closure
--more than one example provided

2 = Some evidence of narrative to support the trait.

*at some point, attempts the basic task of narrating a personal experience, BUT
*explanatory demands unfulfilled for one of these reasons:
--relates several short experiences without evident connection
--gives a bare outline of an experience, with little elaboration
--discusses several traits with accompanying narratives
--link between narrative and trait is weak

1 = Minimal or no evidence of narrative to support the trait.

*development exclusively by generalized summary of recurrent events, OR
*does not identify a personality trait

0 = No response, or unintelligible response, or writes on another topic.

PRIMARY TRAIT SCORING GUIDE: WRITING EXERCISE #2

Primary Trait: Comparison-contrast analysis of two advertisements.

Scoring Guide Categories:

4 = Structured and complete comparison-contrast analysis.

*summary generalizations at beginning and end
*a sense of context beyond the two ads themselves
*appeals in ads clearly stated
*appeals fully supported by detailed reference to particulars in each ad
*clear and logical development

3 = Clear evidence of comparison-contrast development.

*well-organized and coherent, but may lack sense of larger context
*appeals in ads identified and supported
*may be flawed in one of these ways:
--supporting details not sufficiently elaborated
--logical connections sometimes incomplete
--some details peripheral

2 = Evidence of comparison-contrast approach.

*performs basic task of comparing the two ads, BUT
*analytic demands unfulfilled for one of these reasons:
--appeals little more than paraphrases of the ads
--few details offered in support
--discussion of one ad may dominate the response
--tends to be awkwardly organized, illogical, or to lack cohesiveness.

1 = Minimal or no evidence of comparison-contrast response.

*appeal(s) may be unclear or unidentified, OR
*details completely lacking, OR
*mentions one ad, but not other, OR
*development truncated or incoherent

0 = No response, or unintelligible response, or writes on another topic.

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